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Democratic Institutions Support Project

THE POLITICS OF POST-CIVIL WAR LEBANON

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NEAR EAST BUREAU

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

USAID began providing humanitarian assistance to Lebanon in the wake of the 1975-76 civil war. Given the absence of an effective functioning government, no other type of assistance was then feasible. But the signing of the Ta'if Accords and the reconstitution of government based on national elections which those Accords made possible, caused USAID to reconsider its assistance program in Lebanon. The newly established government was clearly in need of help to strengthen its institutional capacities so that it could once again create an environment within which Lebanese citizens would have ample access to goods and services. In short, by 1992 it was apparent to AID/Washington that direct assistance to the Government of Lebanon (GOL) should augment or entirely replace humanitarian assistance provided through PVOs.

Design of an appropriate and effective assistance program was rendered problematical by the extremely complex and still potentially unstable Lebanese political system, and by the lack of up to date information about it. The Democratic Institutions Support Project (DIS) of the ANE Bureau of USAID/Washington sought to alleviate the informational deficit through a sequenced approach to program design. The first step in this approach was the holding of a workshop on June 17-18, 1993, in which four highly regarded experts on Lebanese politics, government, and public administration provided information and interacted with personnel from the ANE Bureau and the DIS project.

On the basis of information provided in this context four documents were produced. The first was a summary of the major findings of the workshop itself, including suggestions for programmatic options. This document was circulated within USAID/Washington. The second document produced was a revised project paper for assistance to the Lebanese executive bureaucracy and parliament. Although there was a pre-existing draft project paper, it had been drawn up when access to Lebanon and information about it was extremely restricted. The workshop provided valuable information and useful insights which were then incorporated into a revised draft of the project paper.

The third document which grew out of the workshop was a briefing paper which outlined the informational and logical bases upon which the project paper rested. The purpose of this briefing paper was to facilitate discussions between the ANE Bureau, on the one hand, and Mission and Embassy personnel as well as relevant GOL officials on the other. Those discussions took place in Beirut in July, 1993. On the basis of those discussions and additional information gathered in Lebanon, further modifications to the project were incorporated into the final draft of the

project paper. The project was approved in September 1993 and is currently being implemented.

This is the fourth document that has emerged from the workshop. A preliminary draft received limited circulation within the ANE Bureau. That draft was subsequently modified and updated in January, 1994. The document reflects the opinions of participants in the workshop and information provided in that setting. It is not an official nor authoritative view. Rather it is an attempt to draw together observations and interpretations by informed analysts of Lebanese affairs. Its purpose is not to reflect US Government policies or views, but to provide background information for personnel of the ANE Bureau and other agencies that may be involved in the provision of assistance to Lebanon.

SECTION I
INTRODUCTION

Although there exists several insightful and detailed analyses of the civil war that raged in Lebanon from 1975 until 1990, a comprehensive study of the post-war Lebanese political scene is still to be written. Yet, much has happened in Lebanon since the October, 1989 Ta'if Agreement gave birth to the country's "Second Republic." Lebanese politics today bear little resemblance to what they were either before the war broke out or during the war years. Therefore, they must be understood in their own terms.

The primary objective of this report is to provide a detailed analysis of the context in which Lebanese politics takes place, and of the actors and forces that currently play a key role in the reconstruction of the Lebanese polity. The questions that will be addressed include:

- What are the rules, both written and unwritten, according to which the Lebanese political game is being played?
- Who are the key players in that game? What are the resources they control, and what are the constraints under which they operate?
- How do these players relate to each other, i.e., what are the alliances formed among them, and what are the main lines of division in the Lebanese polity? What are some of the potential realignments among players?
- Where does Lebanon fit into current negotiations between Arabs and Israelis? How is the outcome of these negotiations likely to affect the course of Lebanese politics?

SECTION II
THE DOMESTIC AND REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF LEBANESE POLITICS

To understand the complex game of Lebanese politics, one must first survey the environment in which it is played. This section describes the four key components of that environment:

- The New Set of Formal rules created by the Ta'if Agreement and the revised constitution derived from it
- The salience of unwritten rules and informal processes in defining how the game is actually played
- Current economic conditions and their political implications
- The penetration of the country's politics by outside forces

A. The Constitutional Framework

A1. The Making of a New Constitution

From 30 September to 22 October 1989, 62 members of the Lebanese Parliament elected in 1972 met in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia, where they agreed on a "Document of National Understanding," better known as the Ta'if Agreement. This path-breaking document, which was the last in a series of until then unsuccessful attempts to rebuild a political system shattered by years of harrowing civil war, marked the beginning of a new era in Lebanon. In retrospect, it stands as the first step toward the country's political reconstruction.

On August 21, 1990, less than a year after the Ta'if meeting, Parliament approved sweeping amendments to Lebanon's Constitution. Since its initial promulgation in 1926, the constitution had been amended six times, the last one being in 1947. None of the previous amendments, however, had altered the structure of power as dramatically as did the revisions of 1990. Together, the Ta'if Agreement and the 1990 Constitution provide the constitutional basis of a new political order, and thus allow one to legitimately speak of the emergence of a "Second Republic."

A2. The 1990 Constitution

A2a. General Features

The 1990 constitution still provides for a parliamentary democracy, but it changes very significantly the distribution of

power within the executive branch. Whereas one of the main features of the 1926 constitution was a very strong presidency, the new constitution shifts most executive powers to the Council of Ministers (also called the Cabinet). Thus, a President-dominated system was transformed into one in which decision-making is supposed to be far more collegial.

Less significantly, the new constitution also increases somewhat the power of the Chamber of Deputies (also called Parliament) and that of its Speaker. Overall, therefore, the constitutional characteristics of the new system are the following: a relatively weak presidency; a powerful Council of Ministers, headed by an influential Prime Minister; and a Parliament and a Speaker whose roles have been marginally enhanced.

A2b. A Weak Presidency

Under the new system, the President, who is elected for a six year term by the Chamber of Deputies, has been deprived of the wide executive powers that Lebanese Presidents had traditionally enjoyed. The shift is summarized in Article 17 of the constitution. The original article read:

> "Executive power shall be entrusted to the President of the Republic who shall exercise it assisted by the Ministers in accordance with conditions laid down in this Constitution."

The new article, by contrast, reads as follows:

> "Executive power shall be entrusted to the Council of Ministers, and the Council shall exercise it in accordance with conditions laid down in the Constitution."

The President's role as a ceremonial head of state is now summarized in article 49:

> "The President of the Republic is ... the symbol of the nation's unity. He shall safeguard the Constitution and Lebanon's independence, unity, and territorial integrity."

In short, the President still presides, but he no longer rules. The list of prerogatives which have been taken away from him is a long one. His authority over the armed forces and his power to negotiate international treaties have been sharply reduced. He can no longer dismiss the Cabinet and individual ministers. In addition, although the President still formally appoints the Prime Minister, he can no longer choose him; instead, he is now constitutionally bound to designate the individual whom binding consultations with Parliament and its Speaker suggest should receive the Premiership.

A2c. A Powerful Council of Ministers

Under the 1990 Constitution, the Council of Ministers becomes the main beneficiary of the Presidency's diminished status. Responsibility for ensuring the execution of laws, for proposing bills, for dismissing parliament, for deploying and administering the army, and for ratifying international treaties—which were some of the President's most significant prerogatives—now come under the responsibility of the Council of Ministers. The President also loses to the benefit of the Council of Ministers much of the leverage he formerly enjoyed vis-à-vis Parliament, including various prerogatives in financial and budget matters.

Under the old constitution, the Cabinet's role was essentially limited to overseeing the daily execution of policies that were decided by the President, usually in consultation with his Prime Minister. In contrast, the 1990 constitution turns the Cabinet into the locus of ultimate executive authority, by giving it responsibility not only for supervising the implementation of policies, but also for designing them.

A2d. An Influential Prime Minister

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities in 1975, the Prime Minister was closely involved in setting policy with the President. Yet, at the time, his role was essentially a function of political custom. It was not formally recognized by the constitution. By contrast, the new constitution spells out very clearly the Prime Minister's prerogatives, which are considerable. In fact, under the new regime, the Prime Minister is constitutionally the single most influential figure in the country.

Thus, the Prime Minister is relatively free to determine the composition of the most powerful institution in the land--the Cabinet--since he is given the right to select the ministers, after consultation with the parliament. (In the previous constitution, this was one of the President's powers.) Once the Cabinet is formed, furthermore, the Prime Minister is expected to act as its leader and spokesperson. He sets its agenda and oversees the operation of the various ministries. Article 64 specifies that "the Prime Minister is the head of the Government and its representative. He speaks in its name and shall be considered responsible for executing the general policy that is set by the Council of Ministers."

Thus, while the President is given a largely symbolic role, it is the Prime Minister who must ensure that the government actually governs. In this role, he is also more autonomous from the President, who no longer appoints him and can no longer dismiss him.

A2e. Enhanced Role for the Parliament

The new constitution slightly strengthens Parliament in relation to the executive branch. It does so in two ways.

First, it mandates that the Chamber of Deputies be closely involved in the process through which the Prime Minister is selected. As mentioned earlier, the President now appoints the Prime Minister only after binding consultations with Parliament. Similarly, only Parliament now has the authority to remove the Prime Minister (who before 1990 could be dismissed by the President).

Second, the new constitution reduces the ability of the executive branch to by-pass the Chamber of Deputies. Prior to 1990, it was possible for the executive branch to issue laws when Parliament was not in session. This possibility no longer exists under the new constitution, which stipulates that no piece of legislation can be passed until it is included on the Parliament's agenda and read aloud before it. Only if the Chamber of Deputies then fails to act within forty days can the Council of Ministers issue the draft bill as law.

The increase in Parliament's powers should not be exaggerated. The Chamber of Deputies remains weak in relation to the executive branch. A more significant change to affect Parliament is a new clause in the constitution which specifies that parliamentary seats must be divided equally between Christians and Muslims. While the previous constitution did not mandate any particular distribution of seats according to religious criteria, an informal agreement reached in 1943 had provided for a distribution of parliamentary seats between Christians and Muslims according to a six-to-five ratio in favor of the former community. In this respect, therefore, the new constitution represents an increase in Muslim control over Parliament.

A2f. A Slight Increase in the Speaker's Power

Together with Parliament's, the Speaker's role is marginally enhanced. First, his term is increased from one to four years, to coincide with that of the Chamber of Deputies. Second, he is now closely involved in the procedure under which the Prime Minister is selected, since he plays a key role in the "binding parliamentary consultations" in which the President must engage before he formally designates the Prime Minister.

Despite this slight increase in his power, the Speaker of Parliament remains much less influential than the Prime Minister, and is even at a disadvantage in relation to the President. For example, while the Speaker of Parliament can be forced to resign by a vote of no-confidence from Parliament, the President does not operate under such a threat.

A2g. The Potential for Political Paralysis

What emerges from this brief description of the 1990 Constitution is a political system in which power is far more widely distributed than under the old one, which concentrated authority in the Presidency. Two basic features of the new constitution underline the extent to which several actors now share power--in theory if not always in practice, as will be shown in the next section. First, the highest office is a collective decision-making body, the Council of Ministers. Second, although the Prime Minister is given a predominant role, the President and Speaker of Parliament are influential personalities as well.

This latter characteristic has led some analysts to argue that the new constitution has created a "troika" or "three presidencies": the Presidency itself, the Presidency of the Council of Minister (the Premiership), and the Presidency of Parliament (the office of the Speaker). Most of these analysts proceed to criticize the new constitution for spreading power far too much, and, therefore, for inviting situations in which the state cannot act decisively. To these observers, the potential for deadlock comes from two sources.

The first is the concentration of executive authority in the hands of the cabinet. Since Cabinet decisions on what the constitution calls "basic national issues" require a two-thirds majority, the executive branch can easily be paralyzed by disagreement in the Council of Ministers. (Article 65 defines "basic political issues" as the following: "The amendment of the Constitution, the declaration of a state of emergency and its termination, war and peace, general mobilization, international agreements and treaties, the annual Government budget, comprehensive and long-term development projects, the appointment of Grade One government employees and their equivalents, the review of the administrative map, the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies, electoral laws, nationality laws, personal status laws, and the dismissal of ministers".)

The possibility that the cabinet will be unable to act decisively is all the more real given that, for political reasons peculiar to Lebanon's heterogeneous society, the Council of Ministers necessarily includes representatives of all major sects. Thus, at times of national crisis—meaning precisely when the Council ought to be able to take swift decisions—inter-sectarian disputes can block the government. Furthermore, if disagreements within the Council of Ministers paralyze it, there is no higher office or individual in a position to break the deadlock.

A second possible source of political paralysis comes from the redistribution of power among the three key actors in the political system: the President, the Prime Minister, and the Speaker of Parliament. Some have argued that, by decreasing the prerogatives of the President and increasing those of the Prime

Minister and the Speaker, the new constitution creates a situation in which the state can operate only if some consensus can be reached between these three individuals. By contrast, disagreements between them will immediately lead to political immobilism. While the formal powers given to the President and the Speaker are clearly inferior to those of the Prime Minister, they nevertheless enable the first two actors to block the entire political process, should they decide to do so.

All in all, the new constitution relies much more than the old one on collegial decision-making, and it requires cooperation among its three key players to work smoothly. As a result, the only way the Second Republic can avoid political deadlock is if its political elite rediscovers the virtues of consensual politics, conciliation, and compromise, and if it devises new mechanisms, both formal and informal, for smoothing intra-elite differences.

B. The Unwritten Rules of Lebanese Politics

Constitutional rules provide only an imperfect guide to Lebanese politics, which are often driven by tacit understandings, informal arrangements, and longstanding practices for which there is no constitutional basis. While such a discrepancy between legal-formal frameworks and political realities is by no means unique to Lebanon, it always has been particularly pronounced there.

B1. The 1943 National Pact

Even by the standards of a region which is known for the informal and personalized nature of its politics, Lebanon stands out. After all, the bedrock of Lebanese political life between the country's independence in 1943 and the outbreak of the civil war in 1975 was less the constitution than an informal, unwritten agreement concluded in 1943 between Maronite President Bishara al-Khoury and his Sunni Prime Minister Riad al-Solh. According to that oral agreement, which came to be known as "the 1943 National Pact," political power was to be divided among the various sects that made up the country.

Under this arrangement, what each sect received was essentially shaped by the extent of its political power at the time of independence. Decisive in this respect was the Christians' political predominance, which guaranteed that the National Pact would be to their advantage. However, the authors of the pact rationalized the confessional distribution of power by arguing that it represented the relative demographic importance of each sect in the country. Conveniently for the Christians, a 1932 census had found that Christians slightly outnumbered Muslims. Thus, demography could be used to justify Christian predominance in the state's institutions.

Among the various Christian groups, the Maronites predictably received the lion's share of power, even though the

1932 census indicated that they represented only 29 percent of the total population—a percentage that most probably had even decreased by 1943. Similarly, among Muslims, Sunnis benefited disproportionately at the expense of Shiites, although only three percentage points separated the two sects (19 percent for the Shiites as opposed to 22 percent for the Sunnis).

Concretely, the National Pact reserved the powerful Presidency for a Maronite, the Premiership to a Sunni, and the relatively powerless position of Speaker of Parliament to a Shiite. All other positions in the government bureaucracy, as well as the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, were similarly allocated along sectarian lines, on the basis of six Christians to five Muslims.

With respect to international and regional politics, the National Pact provided for a "Neither Western, nor Arab" formula, in which Christians and Muslims alike accepted not to ally themselves with external powers. More specifically, Christians would refrain from entering into alliances with Western countries, in exchange for which the Muslims would abandon their longstanding goal of reuniting Lebanon with Syria.

The 1943 National Pact thus contained a few basic, unwritten rules that were expected to define the parameters of Lebanese political life:

- Christians would have more power than Muslims.
- Maronites would prevail over all other sects. This was shown not only in the attribution of the Presidency to a Maronite, but also in the practice of putting Maronites in charge of key ministries (such as Foreign Affairs) and institutions (including the Army and the Central Bank).
- Among Muslims, the Sunnis would play a far more influential role than the Shiites.
- At the inter-sectarian level, the country would be run essentially by a tacit Maronite-Sunni alliance.
- More generally, political order would be maintained through a complex bargaining process among the heads (known as *zu'ama'*, sing. *za'im*) of the country's four major sects: Maronites, Sunnis, Shiites, and Druze. The principle that underlay the entire system was simple: sectarian leaders were expected to maintain control over their respective sectarian followings, while inter-sectarian accommodation at the elite level would enable the most influential families within each sect to reap most of the rewards—economic, symbolic, and sociopolitical—of the system.

- In its foreign policy, the country would not align itself with any Western or Arab power.

B2. Questioning the National Pact

Many of the processes and events that led to the outbreak of the civil war in 1975 can be interpreted as manifestations of growing pressures to redefine the unwritten parameters of Lebanese political life that had been agreed upon in 1943. Several examples can be provided.

1. As the Christians lost their demographic majority, and in particular as the Maronites' percentage of the total population declined, sections of the Muslim community began to call for an end to Maronite hegemony over the state. The Maronite establishment, however, resisted growing Muslim demands for new power-sharing arrangements. This clash between Muslim desire to revise the National Pact and the Maronite leadership's refusal to do so contributed greatly the outbreak of the civil war in 1975.

2. In the 1950s and 1960s, large segments of the Sunni middle and lower classes fell under the spell of pan-Arab, Nasserist, and pseudo-leftist ideologies. They thus became alienated from their traditional leaders, whom they condemned for their presumed indifference to pan-Arab and "progressive" causes, and for their willingness to sacrifice the concerns of the Sunni masses to the political imperatives of their alliance with the Maronite establishment.

The erosion of the Sunni leadership's influence over the Sunni street put tremendous pressure on the National Pact, which after all rested on the ability of the various sectarian elites to deliver the cooperation of their respective constituencies. Several Sunni leaders were faced with the unattractive choice between losing control over their following, or providing at least rhetorical support for the causes dear to the heart of the politicized Sunni public, but at the risk of alienating their Maronite partners. The delicate balancing act that followed could not be sustained for long. Shortly after the outbreak of hostilities in 1975, the Sunni establishment lost control over most of the politically active Sunni public.

3. Similar phenomena affected the Shiite community, albeit later on. By the 1970s, the Shiites had emerged as the largest sect in the country. In addition, they were no longer the predominantly quiescent and rural community which they had been in 1943. Their ranks now contained a significant constituency of intellectuals and professionals unhappy with their sect's second-class status in the country. As a result of such changes, the community had become far more politicized than it had been three decades earlier, and demands for greater Shiite representation in the institutions of the state came to the fore.

Until the late 1970s, the Shiite community's influence over Lebanese politics remained constrained by the dispersion of its

most politically active members over a multiplicity of (predominantly leftist) organizations. By and large, such individuals still thought of themselves less as Shiites than as members or a specific political movements and as followers of particular ideologies. To the extent that they wanted to obtain redress for Shiite grievances, they portrayed their demands not in communal terms, but as those of a disadvantaged group asking for social justice.

For reasons that will be examined later, however, the late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed a dramatic rise in Shiite communal consciousness and solidarity. Thus, throughout the 1980s, the Amal militia's growing power, followed by the rise of Hizballah, enabled the Shiites to shape the course of Lebanese politics in a way that few would have imagined possible at the time of the National Pact.

B3. The Unwritten Rules of the Post-Ta'if Political Order

B3a. Winners and Losers

Just as the 1943 National Pact embodied a certain distribution of power among Lebanon's religious groups, and just as that arrangement reflected these groups' respective bargaining positions at the time of independence, the most important feature of the post-Ta'if political order is that it sanctions a redistribution of power among the country's major sects.

The texts of the Ta'if Agreement and the 1990 Constitution make only a few direct references to this phenomenon. The most important is the clause according to which seats in Parliament must be divided equally between Muslims and Christians. The previous constitution did not specify any particular distribution of seats among sects, but, as mentioned earlier, the National Pact had provided for a six-to-five ratio in favor of Christians. By mandating a 50-50 distribution of parliamentary seats, the new clause innovates in two respects. First, it formalizes the confessional nature of the political system, by putting down in writing what until then had been only an informal political custom. Second, it ends decades of Muslim under-representation in Parliament.

The Ta'if Agreement and the revised constitution, however, reflect changes in the sectarian balance of power that go well beyond those formally mentioned in these two written agreements. Because the Second Republic has retained the unwritten custom of reserving the Presidency to a Maronite, the Premiership to a Sunni, and the Office of Speaker of Parliament to a Shiite, the new constitution's drastic redefinition of the respective prerogatives of these offices has very important implications for the power of each sect in the system. In short, when compared to the pre-civil war situation, Maronites lose a great deal, Sunnis strengthen their position, and Shiites win very little.

Given the sharply diminished authority of the Presidency, the main losers are the Maronites. It is not surprising that, initially, most Maronites refused to accept the Ta'if Agreement, and that those Maronite leaders who backed it lacked support from within their own community. In the post-Ta'if era, Maronites have irremediably lost their hegemony over the state.

The Sunnis, by contrast, emerge stronger. This is reflected primarily in the expanded powers of the (Sunni) Prime Minister, and, secondarily, in the two new parliamentary seats given to the Sunni community. This phenomenon comes as a surprise, particularly if one remembers that the 1980s had brought about a sharp decline in the political fortunes of the Sunni community. It also proves wrong, for the moment at least, those who had predicted that the civil war would usher in the replacement of the 1943-1975 Maronite-Sunni alliance by a Maronite-Shiite axis that would essentially deprive the Sunnis of much of their former power. Clearly, such predictions have failed to materialize so far. Instead, the Sunnis have managed to retain far more influence than the size of their sect (23 percent of the population) appears to warrant. This is due, in part, to the major role that Syria and Saudi Arabia played in bringing about the Ta'if Agreement.

Finally, the Shiite community, which the 1943 National Pact had grossly under- represented, increases its power only marginally. Neither the additional Shiite seats in the Chamber of Deputies nor the slightly enhanced stature of the Parliament's (Shiite) Speaker are commensurate with the actual demographic and political standing of the Shiite community. For instance, the Shiites gain three seats in Parliament, but the Sunni, Druze, and Alawite communities each gain two, so that the relative increase in the Shiites' parliamentary presence is in fact negligible. Similarly, the office of Speaker of Parliament remains the weakest of the "three presidencies." The extension of its term from one to four years constitutes, in practice, only a small gain, since prior to the outbreak of the civil war, speakers were regularly re-elected from one year to the other (Kamil al-As'ad, for instance, remained Speaker for fourteen consecutive years).

When one considers that the Shiite community now represents an estimated 37 percent of Lebanon's population (compared with 20 percent for the Maronites and 23 percent for the Sunnis), it is easy to understand the reason many Shiites feel that neither the Ta'if Agreement nor the 1990 Constitution did justice to their numerical majority, and why they tend to see the new order as merely perpetuating the previous Maronite-Sunni lock on power. In this context, the Shiites are likely to continue to press for an enhanced role in running the country.

B3b. How Much Power Does a Prime Minister Have?

A particularly clear manifestation of the discrepancy between written and unwritten rules in Lebanon is the difference between the formal powers that the constitution confers upon

certain offices, and the extent of the influence that the holders of these offices can actually wield. The example of the Premiership highlight this point.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, the constitution gave the Prime Minister only limited influence. If anything, the Cabinet had more constitutionally mandated authority than the Prime Minister. In practice, however, the situation was very different.

- First, the Council of Ministers had very little independent power, and was in fact subservient to the President and his Prime Minister.

- Second, the actual authority of the Prime Minister varied greatly, depending on the individual holding that office. Forceful personalities from well-established Sunni families—such as Riad al-Solh or Rashid Karame—could exert powers far beyond those that the constitution assigned to their office.

- Finally, the position of Prime Minister became much more influential over time. By the 1960s and early 1970s, the Sunni Prime Minister was often acting as an *alter ego* to the President, and he had a *de facto* veto right over presidential policies that he judged unacceptable. Executive power was actually shared almost equally between the President and his Prime Minister, even though the constitution placed the former far above the latter. (The President's major card, when faced by a recalcitrant Prime Minister, was his ability to fire him; however, such a course of action entailed real political costs, and could destabilize the entire political system, particularly at times of national crisis.)

Under the Second Republic, the actual authority of the Prime Minister still depends far more on who he is than on his constitutionally-mandated powers. Since the Ta'if Agreement was signed in October, 1989, Lebanon has had four Prime Ministers: Salim al-Hoss (until December, 1990), Umar Karame (December, 1990-May, 1992), Rashid al-Solh (May, 1992-October, 1992), and Rafiq Hariri (since October, 1992). None of the first three Prime Ministers even approached the extensive influence over policy-making that Rafiq Hariri has enjoyed. This is because Hariri's authority has less to do with the prerogatives that the constitution formally grants to his office than with his wealth, wide-ranging international connections, strong Syrian and Saudi support, and reputation as an honest individual who can "make things happen." By the same token, unlike Hariri can institutionalize the power that he has been exerting and bestow some of his personal authority on the office he occupies, it is doubtful that his successor will be as influential as he is.

Hariri's example constitutes an unusually pronounced manifestation of the discrepancy between formal role and actual influence. But the primacy of the office-holder over the office is a widespread phenomenon in Lebanon, and all politicians are fully aware of its significance. This is even more true in the post-Ta'if era, when the exact balance of power between the Council of Ministers, the Presidency, and the Chamber of Deputies has yet to be found. In a political system that remains in a state of flux, roles are still being defined and negotiated. All key actors—especially the President, the Prime Minister, and the Speaker— realize this, and, accordingly, they each strive to carve out a bigger role for themselves and for the institutions they control.

B3c. The Need for Confessional Balance and the "Parcelization" of the State

Another unwritten rule of the Second Republic is the need to maintain the Christian-Muslim and inter-sectarian balance of power that was implicitly agreed upon in Ta'if in October, 1989. Thus, even though the 1990 Constitution does not formally specify that the Council of Ministers should include an equal number of Christians and Muslims, that has actually been the case for all cabinets since 1989.

Along similar lines, the Lebanese state has been "parcelized," by which I mean that it has been divided into a series of fiefdoms controlled by particular interest groups and their leaders. Thus, South Lebanon is seen as Amal's or Nabih Berri's fiefdom. Consequently, it is very difficult for individuals who do not have a close connection to Amal or Berri to receive governmental jobs that involve southern affairs. In the Shuf region, a connection to Walid Junblatt or the PSP is necessary. In the Biqa', Hizballah reigns. The same phenomenon applies to the highest institutions of the state: the Presidency is seen as a Maronite preserve and Parliament as the turf of its Shiite Speaker. The state apparatus--from the central bureaucracy down to the local government--is thus being parcelized, and it is this unwritten logic that guides much of its behavior.

B3d. Syria's Overwhelming Power over Lebanese Politics

Of all the unwritten rules of the Second Republic, the single most important one is the following: all key political decisions shall be made in Damascus, not Beirut. It is true that the Ta'if Agreement does provide formally for certain Syrian prerogatives in Lebanon. Its section on "Lebanese-Syrian Relations" contains references to the "distinctive relations" and "special ties" between the two countries, and calls for "cooperation and coordination" between them. In practice, however, the extent of Syrian power in Lebanon goes far beyond these references. Whereas essential provisions of the Ta'if Agreement which were aimed at containing Syrian influence over Lebanese affairs have not been implemented, and are unlikely to

be carried out in the near future, efforts to tighten ties with Syria have proceeded apace. (The various manifestations of Syria's unprecedented power since 1990 will be examined in greater detail below.)

Since the most determined opposition to a strong Syrian role in the country had always come from Maronites, Syria's current hegemonic role in Lebanon also explains why the Maronites' loss of power is even more pronounced than the text of Ta'if or the 1990 Constitution indicate. The Maronites feel that they conceded a great deal in Ta'if, but that they have lost even more in the course of the agreement's uneven implementation. They are, therefore, very sensitive to the discrepancy between the written rules set in Ta'if, which they now feel they could live with, and the reality of the post-Ta'if order, which they believe systematically discriminates against them and violates both the letter of the agreement and the spirit in which he was signed.

C. The Politics of Economic Reconstruction

Prior to 1975, it was common to describe Lebanon as "the Switzerland of the Middle East" or the region's "commercial and banking center." Fifteen years of a particularly ferocious civil war, however, shattered the country's economy and destroyed much of its infrastructure, including factories, roads, power plants, schools, hospitals, and homes.

C1. The Economic Challenges Facing the Government

When Rafiq Hariri became Prime Minister in November 1992, his appointment was welcome by virtually all segments of Lebanese society, and it generated a wave of unprecedented optimism. Hopes for a rapid economic upturn were running high. The new Prime Minister himself unwisely raised expectations when he immediately promised that the Lebanese would begin to see the positive results of his economic policies by the Spring of 1993. Fourteen months later, however, much of this earlier optimism has evaporated. Although the government can take pride in several economic accomplishments, the economy remains a major source of concern.

The three main economic achievements of the Hariri government thus far have been to stabilize the Lebanese pound, bring inflation under control, and restore a measure of domestic and international confidence. These are significant results. In addition, the government has laid the foundation for the long term rehabilitation of Lebanon's infrastructure. Important contracts have been signed with foreign firms to help Lebanon restore and expand telecommunications networks and the electricity and water distribution systems. Meanwhile, several steps have been taken toward the reconstruction of the old city center of Beirut. All these are welcome signs of progress. Nevertheless, there are still serious economic problems, including the following:

- Unemployment remains high and the economy sluggish.

- Basic services (telephone, water, electricity, etc.) are only slowly being restored, which is a source of continuing popular discontent. Individuals and families are often left to their own devices to generate the electricity and store the water they need. Schools, roads, and the housing sector require a massive infusion of capital.

- Public trust in the stability of the current political order remains low. As a result, little domestic investment has taken place so far. Potential investors are not yet convinced that the current government can insure the safety of their investments.

- Persisting doubts regarding Lebanon's internal stability also explain why significant foreign investment has failed to materialize. This applies to wealthy Lebanese expatriates, who by and large have refrained from sending their capital back home. This situation is unlikely to change in the near future, as most wealthy Lebanese abroad are Christians and/or strongly opposed to the current Syrian-dominated order in their country of origin.

In fact, 1993 saw a deterioration of relations between the Lebanese overseas community and the government in Beirut. In May, 1993, the Ministry for Emigrant Affairs issued a decree denouncing as illegal the main organization representing Lebanese abroad, the World Lebanese Cultural Union (WLCU). Subsequently, the Minister accused the leader of the WLCU of attempting to organize opposition to the Ta'if Agreement among Lebanese living overseas. He later alleged that the WLCU leader had committed unspecified "crimes against state security." In this highly polarized environment, the repatriation of emigrant money—which is critical to the success of Lebanon's reconstruction plan—will not take place. This is all the more tragic that, if Lebanese abroad were provided with the right incentives to invest some of their capital into Lebanon, they could shoulder much of the responsibility for financing Lebanon's economic reconstruction needs (approximately $ 12 billion).

- Lack of external confidence also explains why, despite President Hrawi and Prime Minister Hariri's repeated trips to the Gulf states, substantial aid from these states, and from Western donors, has been slow in coming. Although the second half of 1993 witnessed a slight upturn in foreign aid and foreign loans, the amounts collected thus far remain far short of what is needed to finance reconstruction. Furthermore, most of the aid that has been received thus far from the Gulf State is earmarked for the reconstruction of homes and villages destroyed by Israel in Southern Lebanon. Thus,

while it is badly needed, it does very little to jump-start the Lebanese economy.

- Finally, the prospects for future economic aid may have been compromised by the "Gaza-Jericho First" agreement between Palestinians and Israelis. Since it is clear that the Palestinian entity will be in need of a massive infusion of economic aid, and since major lenders and donors already have committed themselves to helping the economy of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Lebanon's share of international and Arab aid can only be expected to decrease in the future.

With respect to foreign aid and foreign investment, the government of Prime Minister Hariri thus faces two dilemmas:

- It needs a major injection of foreign aid to revive the economy and rebuild the polity, but the amount of foreign aid the government can secure depends, in part, on whether it can convince foreign donors and lenders that substantial progress toward political and economic reconstruction is already being made.

- The prospects for a full political and economic recovery are closely tied to those for a comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement. Unless such a settlement is reached, Israel will continue to occupy the south, Hizballah will remain armed, the country will still be prone to destabilization, external and domestic confidence will not increase, and domestic and foreign investment and aid will not pick up significantly. However, because the economic demands of a Palestinian entity would compete with those of Lebanon, a comprehensive settlement could actually result in decreasing aid to Lebanon, which in turn would hurt the reconstruction process. In short, Lebanon stands to pay a high cost whether there is a breakthrough in Arab-Israeli peace negotiations or whether the status-quo lingers.

C2. The Need for Administrative Reform

Upon becoming Prime Minister, Rafiq Hariri identified the reorganization and streamlining of the civil service as one of his primary objectives. For the past fourteen months, his public statements have emphasized repeatedly the need to put an end to bureaucratic corruption, nepotism, and inefficiency.

Unfortunately, 1993 saw little concrete progress toward these goals. This was not for lack of determination on the part of Mr. Hariri, who re-activated the Civil Service Council and the Central Inspection Commission and requested that government ministers submit to him lists of civil servants who should be dismissed or retired. Instead, resistance to administrative reform can be blamed on the following factors:

- Political factions and influential politicians have sought to protect their clients in the civil service. One manifestation of this phenomenon has been Parliament's success thus far in blocking Mr. Hariri's efforts to purge the administration.

- Ministers, too, have been reluctant to dispense with civil servants who, after all, form part of their power base. Significantly, while some ministers complied last November with Hariri's request to submit lists of civil servants targeted for dismissal or retirement, others refused.

- The stability of the current political order depends in part on the maintenance of a careful political balance between sects and factions. Any move to dismiss some civil servants and reorganize the bureaucracy threatens to disrupt this precarious balance. Civil service reform is thus a politically sensitive issue that is potentially destabilizing.

Despite these obstacles, Hariri has succeeded in putting the reform of the civil service on the government's agenda, and he also has taken major steps toward bringing it about. In this as in so many other respects, therefore, the next two years will be decisive (due to Syrian wishes, Hariri is likely to remain Prime Minister until the 1995 Presidential election at least).

What must be stressed here is how critical administrative reform is to the success of the entire reconstruction process. As long as Lebanese have to offer bribes and kick-backs to obtain the licenses, permits, and other government services that they desperately need, they will feel frustrated, exploited, and humiliated by the bureaucracy. So far, Prime Minister Hariri's discourse about the need to weed out corruption and nepotism has been well received by the population, but it still seems to be constantly belied by the daily reality of bureaucratic abuse with which Lebanese have to cope. Thus, public alienation from the state and cynicism toward its representatives remain high. This situation will continue to undermine public trust in the new regime's ability to deliver on its promises of stability and political modernization. It will also diminish internal and external confidence in the regime, and therefore limit the foreign aid and investment without which economic recovery is impossible.

C3. The State's Inability to Provide and the Ascent of Religious Organizations

The war had a devastating impact on public finances, particularly after the mid-1980s. The hostilities caused a sharp decline in economic activity, which in turn reduced the state's tax base. In any event, with the central bureaucracy often paralyzed and local government in disarray, the state was frequently unable to even collect taxes. Most importantly,

throughout the country, militias progressively substituted themselves for governmental institutions, and they raised revenues from the population for their own purposes.

From 1990 through 1992, low economic growth, limited foreign aid, and the government's massive debts and large budget deficits did little to enhance the state's ability to provide the population with much needed social services. The picture improved somewhat in 1993, but it remains gloomy. The state's limited ability to respond to public needs has further undermined the credibility of governmental institutions. It also has contributed greatly to the success of religious groups and organizations that are not committed to a pluralistic political system, but can expand their influence through their demonstrated ability to improve the daily life of the population. Whether one looks at Hizballah, at the Tripoli-based Sunni fundamentalist group called The Islamic Society (*al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya*), or at the Sunni Association of Islamic Charitable Works (*Al-Jam'iyyat al-A'mal al-Khayriyya Al-Islamiyya*) in Beirut, one sees a similar pattern: all owe much of their following to the years they spent working at the grass-roots level to provide educational, health, and other welfare services to deprived populations ignored by the state.

C4. The Potential for Socioeconomic Unrest

Due to years of sluggish economic activity and rampant inflation, Lebanon has been experiencing two highly destabilizing phenomena:

- Entire segments of the lower classes have fallen below the subsistence level and been driven into destitution.
- The middle class has been shrinking, as most of its members have been unable to keep up with the constantly rising cost of living.

In this as in other respects, 1993 brought some improvement, particularly on the inflation front. Nevertheless, progress has not been sufficient to eliminate the political dangers contained in the twin processes of processes of socioeconomic marginalization and pauperization. Perhaps the clearest manifestation of these dangers was the social unrest of early May, 1992, which provoked the collapse of the Karame government.

On May, 6, 1992, Antoine Bishara, the head of the General Labor Federation (which groups some 60 unions and has a total membership of about 200,000) had called for a nation-wide four day strike to protest deteriorating economic conditions. A particularly important source of discontent had been the collapse of the Lebanese Pound, which had led the prices of imported goods to skyrocket, thus forcing many merchants to post the price of these goods in dollars and to refuse to accept the national currency.

Although the unions and several major political organizations had appealed for calm, demonstrations on the first day of strike turned into widespread rioting throughout the country. Private and public property was attacked. In several locations, security forces had to intervene to prevent the looting of shops and banks. In Beirut, demonstrators blocked many of the main streets by setting car tires on fire. On May 6, 1992, the Agence France Presse reported that "black smoke covered the Lebanese capital." It quoted a young demonstrator as saying: "Today we burn tires, tomorrow it'll be looting." Fires were also raging in the Biqa' Valley. In the southern port of Tyre, a crowd attacked and set fire to the home of then-Finance Minister Ali al-Khalil. In Zahle, the hometown of Elias Hrawi, demonstrators went to the President's residence chanting anti-government slogans.

The lesson of the May 6, 1992 riots is clear: demonstrations and protests over cost-of-living issues can easily turn violent when increasing segments of the population believe that they have very little to lose, and when they feel moral outrage at the government's apparent unwillingness to stem corruption. As mentioned earlier, although the economy has improved since Rafiq Hariri became Prime Minister, it remains weak. In late April, 1993, the Hariri government confronted its first major socioeconomic crisis when school teachers and professors at the Lebanese University went on strike to protest low salaries and poor working conditions. Lebanese University professors struck again on December 12 and 13, 1993, while both private and public school teachers did the same a day later. A general strike planned for December 15, 1993 was cancelled at the last minute. Meanwhile, discontent among taxi drivers has been growing, resulting in demonstrations in January, 1994.

The link between economic growth and political reconstruction is clearly a dialectical one. There can be no economic revival without a normalization of political life and a rebuilding of the country's institutional and administrative structure. At the same time, some progress must take place on the economic front for political confidence to be restored and institution-building to proceed. Accordingly, whether the government can build on the economic gains it achieved in 1993 will be instrumental in deciding Lebanon's future.

D. The Role of External Actors

D1. Intra-Lebanese Conflicts and Foreign Interference

Ever since the 1950s, Lebanon has found it very difficult to extricate itself from inter-Arab struggles. Time and again, regional powers have used Lebanon as a battleground to settle ideological feuds and expand their influence at the expense of their neighbors.

This may explain why Lebanese accounts of the political calamities that have befallen their country often start by

blaming outsiders. Indeed, competing and often contradictory conspiracy theories of the civil war abound, both in Lebanon and among Lebanese expatriates. Christian leader Raymond Eddé, for instance, still maintains that most of Lebanon's misfortunes can be attributed to Henry Kissinger. He initially put forward this argument in 1974, and has been propagating variations on this theme ever since. Similarly, when the May, 1992 rioting forced Prime Minister Umar Karame to step down, the Sunni leader did not blame his downfall on his failure to improve economic conditions in the country, and on widespread corruption within his cabinet. Instead, he declared that Lebanon was the victim of a conspiracy designed to make it capitulate to Israel. A few months later, on October 16, 1992, General Michel Aoun, who usually finds it hard to agree with Umar Karame, nevertheless concurred with him on the primary reason for Lebanon's troubles. "The trio of Syria, Israel, and the U.S. is responsible for Lebanon's problems," he declared.

It is easy to see the excesses of such interpretations. First, they either ignore or severely downplay the internal reasons for Lebanon's problems and the extent to which the wounds that Lebanese have suffered since the 1970s have been self-inflicted. Second, they fail to recognize that it is often the Lebanese themselves who have dragged foreign powers into their country in an attempt to use outside support against their domestic opponents. Lebanon's recent history provides several examples of this phenomenon:

- It may be true that the civil war would not have taken place had it not been for the destabilizing influence of the Palestinian organizations in the country. However, one should not forget that, initially at least, large segments of the Lebanese public —primarily Muslims, but also many Greek Orthodox—welcomed the armed Palestinian presence and proceeded to use it against those within the primarily Maronite establishment who resisted reform.

- In March-April 1976, the Lebanese Front (a coalition of Maronite militias) welcomed the Syrian military intervention designed to prevent its defeat by the Lebanese National Movement (a coalition of primarily Muslim political organizations and militias on the left).

- A few years later, the tables had turned, and Muslim militias were actively soliciting Syrian support against the Lebanese Forces (which by then had become the most influential politico-military organization among Christians). For their part, the Lebanese Forces were cultivating their new connection with Israel.

- General Michel Aoun welcomed military and diplomatic backing from Iraq when he launched his "war of liberation" against Syrian forces in March, 1989.

Baghdad, of course, was eager to provide Aoun with arms and money, in an attempt to weaken the influence of its old Syrian rival in Lebanon, and to punish Damascus for its support of Iran during the Iran-Iraq war. But to stress "Iraqi interference in Lebanese affairs" is to ignore the extent to which this "interference" was in fact solicited by Aoun.

- Aoun's case also illustrates the propensity of Lebanese politicians to switch foreign patrons almost overnight, whenever it suits their immediate interests. Thus, Aoun's proclamation of a war of liberation against Syria in early 1989 did not prevent him less than a year later to turn to Syria for support against Samir Ja'ja''s Lebanese Forces (this took place after the failure of Aoun's "war of liberation," and as he now identified his main priority as being the elimination of Lebanese Forces' influence within the Christian enclave). For their part, the Lebanese Forces had no qualms about enlisting mixed Israeli and Iraqi backing against Aoun.

It is easy to find scores of other examples to demonstrate that foreign powers have rarely intervened in Lebanese politics without being invited by a Lebanese faction eager to muster support against its domestic foes. While it is true that, in the course of their manipulation of Lebanese players, regional states have demonstrated remarkable cynicism and utter indifference to Lebanese suffering and loss of life, it is also fair to say that their task has been greatly facilitated by the short-sighted and petty calculations of Lebanese politicians. One can only hope that Lebanese have learned at least two lessons from their unfortunate experiences with foreign patrons. First, it is easier to pull outside forces into Lebanon's affairs than it is to push them out after they have outlived their usefulness to their Lebanese hosts. Second, outside powers have agendas of their own, and they are thus bound to clash at some point with even those Lebanese organizations which had invited them into Lebanon in the first place.

Finally, while the disruptive nature of much outside interference in Lebanese affairs is evident, one should not lose sight of the stabilizing influence that foreign actors have exerted, at times, on the course of Lebanese politics. One may consider the following examples.

- It was Iraq which (for its own self-interested motives) engineered a truce between the Lebanese Forces and Michel Aoun in East Beirut in April, 1990, putting an end to months of devastating infighting within the Christian enclave.

- Similarly, in January, 1989, six months of fighting between Amal and Hizballah for control of southern Lebanon came to an end when Iran and Syria sponsored a

cease-fire between the two organizations. In early May, 1990, following a renewal of armed clashes between the two Shiite militias both in Beirut's southern suburbs and in southern Lebanon, Syria once again forced a security agreement between them.

- Most importantly perhaps, one cannot ignore that the peace that Lebanon has enjoyed since October, 1990 would not have been possible without the presence of some 35,000 Syrian troops in the country.

D2. The Key Foreign Players Today

Three countries currently play a decisive role in Lebanese politics: Syria, Israel, and Iran. To a lesser extent, Saudi Arabia also exerts influence, particularly since Rafiq Hariri became Prime Minister. This section summarizes these countries' past involvement in Lebanese politics, their goals over the years, and the main Lebanese agents through which they have pursued their objectives.

D2a. Syria

Of all the forces, domestic and foreign, currently active in the Lebanese arena, Syria is undeniably the strongest. In fact, many observers argue that Lebanon has become a mere political enclave of Syria.

Damascus' first major and direct involvement in the Lebanese civil war goes back to 1976. Acting upon the formal request of the Lebanese President and with American and Israeli blessing, Syrian troops entered the country to support Christian forces which were about to be defeated militarily by Lebanese leftist and Palestinian militias. Syria's primary motive at the time was to prevent the take-over of Lebanon by a coalition in which the PLO was very influential. Such a scenario would have presented two major disadvantages for Syria. First, it would have greatly limited its leverage over the Palestinian organization. Second, and more importantly, it would have raised the prospect of an Israeli intervention in Lebanon. The latter scenario, in turn, would have presented Syria with a choice between two unattractive alternatives: a war with Israel, which Damascus could only lose; or staying on the sidelines, at the cost of forfeiting Syria's pan-Arab credentials and demonstrating the emptiness of its claim to be the leading representative of Arab interests in the fight against Israel.

By entering Lebanon to prevent a Christian defeat, the Syrian regime avoided this predicament. Subsequently, the driving force of its policy in Lebanon remained its desire to prevent any of the factions or states involved in the Lebanese conflict from playing a hegemonic role, thus leaving Damascus itself in a dominant position. President Hafiz al-Asad proved remarkably successful at this game—with the possible exception of the

1982-83 period, which saw the peak of Israeli influence over Lebanese affairs.

Syria also benefited from the mistakes committed by its rivals. For instance, Israel's alienation of Lebanon's Shiite community after its 1982 invasion worked to Syria's advantage. When in 1983 the Iranian regime, then eager to export its revolution to the Arab world, requested Syrian permission to organize Hizballah in the Syrian-controlled Biqa' Valley, Damascus was pleased to accept. Logistical and material assistance—from contingents of Revolutionary Guard to weapons—soon flowed from Teheran to the Biqa' through Damascus. Hafiz al-Assad reasoned that Hizballah would be a useful tool for harassing the Israeli and Western forces in Lebanon, which at the time were seeking to buttress a Christian-dominated government not particularly well-disposed toward Syria. Hizballah could help Damascus demonstrate to Israel and Western governments that Syria was still a force to be reckoned with, and that Syrian wishes for the future of Lebanon could not be disregarded without heavy costs.

Syria's major break came with Iraq's ill-fated invasion of Kuwait, on August 2, 1990. As a reward for Syria's nominal participation in the anti-Iraq coalition, the Bush administration condoned Syria's massive military intervention against General Michel Aoun, in October, 1990. With Aoun's defeat, Syria eliminated the last organized and powerful force capable of resisting its complete domination of Lebanese politics.

Since October, 1990, therefore, Syria has emerged as the hegemonic force in Lebanon, with American and Arab blessing. A close observer of the Lebanese political scene estimated that most highly placed Syrian officials now devote a third of their time to Lebanese affairs, and referred to Syrian Vice-President Abd al-Halim Khaddam as Lebanon's "new mutasarrif" or "new High Commissioner." This is no exaggeration, considering that the institutional game in Lebanon is indeed completely manipulated by Syria. All major political decisions and high level appointments regarding Lebanon are now made in Damascus. The extremely limited freedom of maneuver of all Lebanese politicians vis-à-vis Syria cannot be over-emphasized. No politician or group can afford to go against Syrian wishes on issues which Damascus considers critical to its security and interests.

Syrian power in Lebanon has had several beneficial results for the Lebanese: the end of civil hostilities; the disbanding and disarmament of the militias, except Hizballah; and the re-establishment of effective government control over most parts of the country. None of these major achievements would have been possible without the presence of some 35,000 Syrian troops.

The Lebanese, however, have paid a very high price for security: they have lost control over their own affairs. Peace, in other words, has been achieved at the expense of sovereignty. The "Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination" which

the Lebanese and Syrian governments signed in May, 1991 has even provided Damascus with an official recognition of its hegemonic role in Lebanon. Among other features, the treaty describes the security of both countries as "interconnected," and it calls for bilateral agreements to promote tight cooperation and policy-coordination between them. Given the disparity in power between Syria and Lebanon, the treaty essentially invites the government in Beirut to align its positions on those of its counterpart in Damascus, and it provides legal justification for that process.

During the second half of 1993, several steps were taken to give concrete substance to the 1991 treaty. Most important was the decision to put life into the "Higher Council," the primary function of which is defined as follows by Article 6 (1c) of the treaty: "The Council shall formulate the general policy of coordination and cooperation in the political, economic, security, military, and other fields, and shall oversee its application." Article 6 (1a) also states that the Council shall be composed of the Syrian and Lebanese Presidents, Prime Ministers, Deputy Prime Ministers, and Speakers of Parliament. The fact that the Higher Council can claim extensive powers-article 6 (1d) of the 1991 treaty notes that its decisions "are binding and effective within the framework of the two countries' respective constitutions and laws"-has created some alarm among Lebanese who see it as yet another vehicle for the subordination of their country to Syria.

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In August, 1993, a Secretary General-Lebanese Maronite Nasri Khoury, a member of the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party, which is one of Damascus' main allies in Lebanon- was appointed to the Higher Council, which in effect activated that institution. This nomination was significant in that it took place within days of Prime Minister Hariri's decision to deploy army troops in southern Lebanon, in the wake of Israel's bombardment. Damascus was reported to have been very displeased by Mr. Hariri's failure to fully consult with the Syrian government prior to making that decision (Damascus' views on the subject explain why so few Lebanese troops were eventually deployed). In this respect, the activation of the Higher Council can be seen as Damascus' way to remind Mr. Hariri of who is really in charge in Lebanon. More generally, it can be interpreted as an effort by President Hafiz al-Asad to tighten control over Lebanon's domestic and foreign policies, at a critical juncture in Middle East peace negotiations.

In September, 1993, less than a month after Nasri Khoury's appointment, Lebanese and Syrian officials signed four social and economic "framework agreements," which lay the foundation for extensive cooperation between the two countries. The "Social and Economic Cooperation Agreement" states in its Article 2 that "both parties will strive to arrive at a bilateral common market, progressively." It also calls for the removal of all restrictions on the freedom of movement of Syrians and Lebanese between the two states, the coordination of agricultural and industrial

development policies, the implementation of common industrial projects, and the coordination of social and financial legislation. Other agreements provide detailed guidelines for future cooperation in the agricultural and health fields.

Syria today exerts its influence over Lebanese affairs through multiple channels. In fact, as will now be shown, all sources of authority in Lebanon are under direct or indirect Syrian control.

Not only is the Syrian army conspicuous throughout the country, but the Lebanese Army itself has fallen under Syrian tutelage. In part, this is a product of the 1991 Defense and Security Pact, which called for military coordination and the exchange of officers and instructors between the two countries. In practice, the pact has led to the progressive subordination the Lebanese army to its Syrian counterpart. Lebanese officers who used to do their military training in France or the United States are now trained in Syria, much to their chagrin. In addition, to control the Lebanese Army leadership, the Syrian authorities have sought to buy the loyalty of officers, as they do in Damascus, by allowing them to engage in smuggling, drug trafficking, and questionable real estate deals. In a way, the Lebanese army is being "clientelized" by Syria. It is progressively being turned into the grateful beneficiary of Syrian largesse.

Another manifestation of Syria's overwhelming influence in Lebanon is that all key government officials must answer to Damascus, from Prime Minister Hariri and President Hrawi down to ministers, most of whom make weekly trips to the Syrian capital to receive directives. One incident perhaps best captures the extent of Syrian power over Lebanese politics. In late August, 1993, following mounting tensions between Mr. Hariri and several of his ministers, Syrian Vice President Abd al-Halim Khaddam traveled to Beirut, where he reaffirmed Damascus' support for Mr. Hariri and stated that the Prime Minister would remain in office until the next Presidential election in 1995. He added that ministers displeased with that situation should find new jobs for themselves. His declarations were enough to put an end to a serious governmental crisis which had raised the prospect of Mr. Hariri's resignation, and which had been triggered in the first place by the perception of a decline in Syrian support for Mr. Hariri. The fact that a cabinet breakdown in Beirut could be averted through Syrian intervention, and that the head of government in a nominally independent country can owe his longevity in office to the leader of another country highlights Syria's ability to manipulate the Lebanese political process.

In addition to its control over the cabinet, Syria also has connections with all Lebanese groups, including Nabih Berri's Amal, Walid Junblatt's Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), and Damascus' longstanding ally, the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party (SSNP), which currently controls six seats in Parliament and recently saw one of its members, Nasri Khoury, appointed

Secretary General of the Syrian-Lebanese Higher Council. Syria also has sought to use Hizballah's military presence in the south as a way of putting pressure on the Israeli government.

Finally, Syria has proven remarkably successful at manipulating to its advantage intra-Lebanese divisions and old family rivalries. Over the last few years, Damascus has sought to undermine its foes in Lebanon by promoting their rivals. A case in point was the October, 1992 appointment of Bassam al-Mortada as Minister of Transportation in the Hariri government. Bassam al-Mortada is a judge from the Biqa' who hails from an influential Shiite family that has traditionally competed for influence with the al-Husseini family. His appointment was a way for the Syrians to weaken former Speaker of Parliament Hussein al-Husseini in his own constituency by providing one of his local rivals with greater sources of patronage. In countless other cases, Syria has strengthened its hold over Lebanon by reactivating and manipulating old family rivalries. This phenomenon illustrates a point made earlier, i.e., that foreign interference in Lebanon has usually capitalized on the fault lines of Lebanese society.

Along similar lines, Damascus has enlisted the cooperation of individuals from minority groups, including the Armenians, the Assyrians, and the Alawites. Such communities perceive several advantages in establishing close ties with Syria. First, they feel reassured that the Syrian army will defend their security as effectively as it has that of their co-religionists and family relatives in Syria. Second, they sometimes derive great economic benefits from their Syrian connections. For instance, 'Anjar, a predominantly Armenian town located in the Biqa' Valley, close to the Syro-Lebanese border, is a major touristic center for the Syrian bourgeoisie (it is also the headquarter of the Syrian intelligence, or *Mukhabarat*, in Lebanon). When the Soviet Union still existed, Syria also was an important channel for the Armenian-controlled silver trade and contraband going from the USSR to Lebanon. Over the past few years, Syria has been able to use such longstanding ties to its political advantage.

Damascus thus holds all the cards in Lebanon. Yet, it nevertheless operates under several constraints, the most important of which is the Lebanese's widespread resentment of the pervasive Syrian influence in their country. This frustration is not limited to the Christians. It is a phenomenon that cuts across confessional differences and brings together large segments of the Christian and Muslim (especially Sunni) communities. Anti-Syrian feelings are constantly fueled not only by the apparently unlimited scope of Syrian power, but also by the way in which this power is exercised: Lebanese feel bitter about the crude and heavy-handed way in which the Syrian military has been dealing with them on a daily basis over the last three years. They also resent the extent to which Syria uses Lebanon as an outlet for its goods, and they believe that Lebanon's economy is subsidizing Syria's. Such ill-feeling will subside neither easily nor soon.

D2b. Israel

Ever since 1970, when the PLO was expelled from Jordan only to find refuge in Lebanon, Israel has had a deeply polarizing effect on Lebanese politics. In the early- to mid-1970s, Israel repeatedly retaliated for Palestinian guerrilla attacks by launching devastating raids on Lebanon. As a result, pre-existing tensions between the Muslim and Christian communities were exacerbated by disagreements over the appropriate response to Israel's actions. In 1973, such disagreements even led to the resignation of Sunni Prime Minister Sa'ib Salam, who felt deeply frustrated by Maronite President Suleiman Franjieh's unwillingness to react more forcefully to Israeli attacks.

Soon after the civil war broke out, Israel stepped into the fray. In 1975-76, it established close links with a former Major in the Lebanese Army, Saad Haddad, and sponsored his creation of a militia along Lebanon's border with Israel. This militia, then called the Free Lebanon Army, was renamed in 1984 the South Lebanon Army (SLA). It soon gained control over what Israel began to call its "security belt," "security zone," or "buffer zone."

In March, 1978, Israel went one step further when it invaded southern Lebanon, and pushed Palestinian guerrillas north of the Litani river. Although it subsequently withdrew, it allowed Major Saad Haddad to expand the area under his control. In the months that followed, Israel also established a close connection to Bashir Gemayel and his Christian-dominated Lebanese Forces, which the Israeli Government helped to organize, train, and equip.

In the summer of 1982, Israel launched a second invasion of Lebanon. This one went all the way to Beirut, which thus became the first Arab capital to be besieged and eventually entered by the Israeli army. The Israeli move into Lebanon was a bold attempt to achieve several objectives. One was to prevent any future Palestinian raid on northern Israel. Yet, the Israeli-Lebanese border had been quiet for some time when Israeli tanks rolled into Lebanon. Accordingly, a second and more important objective of the invasion was to enable Israel to consolidate its hold over the West Bank. To tighten its control over the West Bank, Jerusalem needed to eliminate the PLO not only as a military force, but also as a source of political leadership for the Palestinians. Crushing the PLO inside Lebanon, Israeli leaders hoped, would lead West Bank Palestinians to resign themselves to living under Israeli rule. Finally, Israel was trying to redraw Lebanon's political map to further its political and security interests. Its strategy was to drastically alter the balance of power among Lebanese factions to provide for the election to the Presidency of a strong, pro-Israeli figure (Lebanese Forces leader Bashir Gemayel) who would both restore Maronite hegemony in Lebanon and sign a peace treaty with Israel. This, Jerusalem hoped, would fulfill several longstanding Israeli objectives: it would stabilize Israel's northern border; it would further demoralize the Palestinians, who would see yet one more Arab state (after Egypt in 1979) agreeing to a separate

peace with Israel; and it would put new pressures on other Arab countries, including Syria, to normalize relations with Israel.

Israel's invasion of Lebanon cost the Jewish state enormously in terms of world public opinion. Unprecedented criticism of Israeli policies, and in particular of the indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas, were heard around the globe. The move into Lebanon left the Israelis themselves deeply polarized about the wisdom of the invasion, and about its human, economic, and moral costs. Soldiers refused to serve, officers refused to be sent to Lebanon, and the largest public demonstrations in the country's history took place against the war.

Yet, by mid-August 1982, the Israeli government could point to definite results to justify its decision to invade ten weeks earlier. Although the PLO had not been destroyed, it had been expelled from Lebanon. The young and charismatic leader of the Lebanese Forces, Bashir Gemayel, had just been elected President, and he was expected to bow to Israeli wishes for a peace treaty between Lebanon and Israel.

Even these limited successes, however, proved ephemeral. Only thirteen days after his election as President, Bashir Gemayel was assassinated. Although the Israeli siege of Beirut had forced the PLO out of Lebanon and weakened it, the Palestinian organization not only had survived as a potent political and military force, but it had been strengthened diplomatically by the events. Within a few years, it even reestablished some of its former military positions in southern Lebanon. Finally, although Amin Gemayel, who succeeded his dead brother, did sign a peace treaty with Israel on May 17, 1983, that treaty was short-lived. On March 6, 1985, under great domestic pressure, Gemayel was forced to abrogate it.

By the mid-1980s, therefore, Israeli leaders were left contemplating the failure of their earlier dream to restore Maronite hegemony over Lebanon and force that country's government—against a large and powerful current in its public opinion—to be the second Arab country after Egypt to agree to sign a peace treaty with Jerusalem. Israel's Lebanon adventure had turned into a debacle. It had left Israel with only one lasting benefit: the expansion of its "security zone" in the south.

In light of such developments, it is not surprising that, after 1985, Israel displayed great reluctance to become too directly and conspicuously involved in Lebanese affairs. This did not prevent Jerusalem from providing logistical and material support to the Lebanese Forces, or more discreet and indirect assistance to Hizballah, which the Israeli government initially saw as a potential ally against the Palestinians' ability to rebuild their positions in southern Lebanon. Neither did it deter Israel from assassinating then-Hizballah leader Shaykh Abbas Musawani, his wife, and their five year old son, in February,

1992, and from launching shortly thereafter a large-scale military assault on Hizballah bases north of the security zone. And, of course, one should not forget Israel's week-long bombardment of southern Lebanon, in late July-early August 1993.

By and large, however, Israel's post-1985 policy in Lebanon has focused on consolidating its control over the security zone. In 1985, the Israeli government declared that it now viewed that narrow strip of land as a buffer area under joint Israeli and SLA control. (In 1985, Major Haddad was also succeeded at the head of the SLA by another former Lebanese Army officer, General Antoine Lahd, who was still in charge at the time of this writing). Under the right-wing government of Yitzhak Shamir, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Israeli government also tried to cut off the buffer zone from the rest of Lebanon, and partially absorb it into Israel. For instance, villages inside the security zone were linked to the roads and to the electricity and telephone networks of northern Israel. Their inhabitants, too, were encouraged to find work inside Israel. To this day, the Jewish state also uses the security belt as an outlet for its agricultural exports (many of which subsequently find their way to other parts of Lebanon).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Israeli and SLA troops in the security zone became the targets of increasingly frequent guerrilla attacks by Hizballah and other self-proclaimed "resistance groups" based in villages and towns located north of the zone. As Israel retaliated on Hizballah strongholds, southern Lebanon found itself caught in a constant cycle of violence. Just as twenty years earlier it had been turned into a battleground for a war of attrition between Israel and the Palestinians, it now was emerging as the primary arena for a growing conflict between Israel and radical Islamic groups. A Lebanese government painfully trying to improve security conditions and restore public confidence found its efforts and credibility constantly undermined by its inability to prevent Hizballah attacks and Israeli retaliation, and by its powerlessness in the face of repeated Israeli mock raids on Palestinian camps located near the cities of Sidon and Tyre.

Since the appointment of Rafiq Hariri as Prime Minister, in October, 1992, Israel's occupation of part of southern Lebanon has continued to represent a major challenge for the Lebanese government. In the newly-elected parliament, Hizballah repeatedly has seized on the issue of the Israeli presence in the south to embarrass the government by pointing to its inability to restore Lebanese sovereignty over part of the country.

Tensions between Israel and Hizballah reached a climax in late July, 1993, when Jerusalem launched "Operation Settling Accounts," Israel's largest attack on Lebanon since its 1982 invasion. The assault came as a response to Hizballah activities. For several weeks, the Shiite organization had stepped up military pressure on Israel. As mentioned above, its attacks on Israeli and SLA troops and material inside Israel's self-declared "security zone" were not new. And until July 1993,

Israel had limited its reprisal raids to the guerrilla's main bases, just north of the security zone. There was, in effect, a "gentlemen's agreement" between Israel and Hizballah: as long as Hizballah would restrict its actions to the security zone, Israel would not engage in massive retaliation against southern Lebanese villages.

In July 1993, however, Hizballah ignored Israeli warnings. Acting at the instigation of the Iranian regime and with Syrian acquiescence, it not only escalated significantly its raids on the security zone (killing seven Israeli soldiers), but, more importantly, it crossed the implicit "red line" formed by the Israeli-Lebanon border when it launched several attacks on settlement towns in northern Israel, thereby forcing some 150,000 Israelis to find refuge in bomb shelters or move south to live with family relatives.

For weeks, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had been warning that such escalation would lead Israel to "make life impossible in all of southern Lebanon." He quickly acted upon his earlier threat. For seven consecutive days, Israeli jets, helicopters, and artillery created devastation throughout southern Lebanon, bringing new misery to families that were just beginning to rebuild their lives.

The Israeli raids were not limited to attacks on the bases of Hizballah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command, which had cooperated with Hizballah in previous attacks on Israel. Instead, the Israeli army blasted entire villages and towns, creating unprecedented destruction, even by the standards of an area which had experienced a ferocious civil war and two Israeli invasions since 1975.

On July 25, Israeli airplanes dropped leaflets on the town of Nabatiyeh, urging its inhabitants to leave it by 4:00 p.m. the following day. Shortly after the deadline, the town was struck by more than 100 Israeli artillery and tank shells. On July 28, the Israeli-backed SLA warned the residents of the city of Tyre to leave. Two days later, no more than about 15,000 of the city's 80,000 inhabitants were still there, and the city had been badly damaged. The same pattern was repeated in dozens of southern towns and villages.

By the time the fighting ceased in early August, Israel had carried out over 1,200 air raids, dropped over 1,000 bombs, and sent an estimated 28,000 rounds of artillery shells on southern villages. An estimated 132 people were dead and 500 wounded, most of them civilians unaffiliated with Hizballah. 75 villages were destroyed, together with an estimated 2,000 houses. Another 50,000 homes were badly damaged.

Most importantly, the Israeli attack had created a new mass exodus from southern Lebanon, as an estimated 350,000 people had fled the south toward Beirut. The purposeful depopulation of areas inhabited by civilian populations had been central to

Israel's operation. On July 28, 1993, Mr. Rabin had declared in front of the Knesset that the goal of the on-going military assault was to "provoke an exodus of inhabitants from southern Lebanon toward the north in order to put pressure on the Lebanese government to end Hizballah's anti-Israeli activities." What this meant for Lebanon could be stated even more simply: a country already struggling with a huge, pre-existing refugee problem which the government had finally begun to address with a measure of success was suddenly put several steps backwards. Those paying the highest price were families which had just started to return to a normal life after years of regional interference had turned them into the unwilling hostages of Palestinian, Israeli, and Syrian manipulations.

The events described above illustrate very clearly the extent to which Lebanon continues to be used as a pawn in regional political game. The crisis started because Iran encouraged Hizballah to step up its operations against Israel, and because Syria made no real effort to restrain the Shiite organization, using it instead to express its frustrations at the deadlock reached by peace negotiations in Washington. Israel's reaction, in turn, was not only designed to restore security for its northern settlements. It was also intended to send a political message to Syria, i.e., that Jerusalem would not be intimidated by Damascus' attempt to pressure it into making concessions at the negotiation table. In addition, the Israeli leadership sought to force the Lebanese government to deploy army troops in the south, in order to control Hizballah. It may have hoped that such a move would create a rift between Beirut and Damascus, thus making it possible to "decouple" Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese negotiations, a longstanding Israeli objective. Finally, Prime Minister Rabin's desire to consolidate his domestic image as a tough leader may also have played a role, particularly at a time when he was being accused of being too conciliatory toward the Palestinians.

In short, Iran, Syria, and Israel showed no hesitation in risking the destruction of Lebanon's fragile economic and political recovery in order to achieve their own objectives in regional politics. Most disturbing perhaps was Israel's willingness to retaliate for the actions of a few hundred Hizballah guerrillas by creating a new gigantic refugee problem, destroying dozens of southern villages, and punishing hundreds of thousands of innocent families, including by killing some of their members. All of this, in fact, was to improve Israel's position at the bargaining table, and in order to reassure the Israeli electorate that Mr. Rabin could still be trusted to protect Israeli security even as he made political concessions to the Palestinians.

D2c. Iran

Contacts between Lebanon's Shiites and their co-religionists in Iran go back hundreds of years. They have existed at least since the sixteenth century, when the Safavid dynasty in Iran

made Shiism the official religion of the state. Ever since, Shiite men of religion in southern Lebanon have interacted with their Iranian counterparts. Among senior clerics, marriages often have cemented the bonds between the two communities.

Yet it was only in the wake of Khomeini's Islamic revolution that Iran became a major player on the Lebanese political scene. In 1982, at a time when the authorities in Tehran were bent on exporting their revolution to the Arab world, Iran sent a contingent of Revolutionary Guards to the Biqa' Valley, where they helped organize, train, finance, and equip Hizballah. What followed was the well-known saga of Hizballah-sponsored hostage-taking and attacks on Western and Israeli interests in Lebanon.

Throughout the 1980s, Tehran's financial and logistical support for Hizballah was instrumental in enabling the radical Shiite group to establish strongholds in the Biqa' Valley and the southern suburbs of Beirut, and to expand its influence in the south.

In the summer of 1989, following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini and Hashemi Rafsanjani's subsequent election to the Iranian presidency, many observers predicted that Iranian foreign policy would become increasingly "pragmatic" and "moderate." These analysts reasoned that, as Iranian leaders would turn their attention toward the rebuilding of an economy shattered by Iran's eight year-long war with Iraq, they would be eager to secure Western aid and investment. In this context, many anticipated that Iran would progressively drop its support for Hizballah, which would increasingly be seen in Tehran as an obstacle to improved relations with the West.

These predictions failed to materialize. Not only has Tehran maintained very close ties with Hizballah and continued to provide it with financial support, weapons, and military advisers, but it only partially has sought to moderate the policies of its client. It is true that, in the early 1990s, Iran pressed Hizballah to release the last Western hostages, and that in 1992 it also convinced the Hizballah leadership to take part in the legislative elections of September. However, in the area of armed resistance against Israel, Iran has not exerted any effort to restrain its client. Several reasons explain Iran's continued support for Hizballah.

- First, the Iranian political elite still consists of at least two main factions, one bent on consolidating the revolution at home by focusing on economic reconstruction, and the other still insisting on exporting the revolution. President Rafsanjani, who generally has sided with the earlier group, has had to pick his fights with his more radical foes. Thus, he repeatedly has found it expedient to let them have their way with respect to Iran's policy toward Lebanon

and Israel. This had enabled him to focus on domestic issues, which are more important to him.

- Second, the Iranian political elite as a whole—including Rafsanjani himself—appreciates being able to use Hizballah to put pressure on Israel. Since southern Lebanon can been described as "the last hot front against Israel," Hizballah enables Tehran to demonstrate its "anti-Zionist" credentials when it so wishes. The Shiite organization has become the main vehicle through which Iran can affect the pace of Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. It enables Iran to remain a player not only in Lebanon, but to some extent at least on the much larger regional scene. Considering that during the 1980s Iran invested a great deal of energy and resources in trying to establish footholds in Arab states, and that Lebanon was the only country where it succeeded, Tehran is understandably reluctant to relinquish its power base there.

- Finally, the relationship between Tehran and Damascus has deteriorated markedly since 1988. Over the past three years, improving U.S.-Syrian relations and closer ties between Syria and pro-American Arab regimes, especially Saudi Arabia, have created concern among leaders in Tehran that they may soon no longer be able to count Syria as an ally. Should that scenario materialize, Hizballah would become all the more valuable to Tehran, as it would be the only actor through which it can directly affect the course of Arab politics.

Iran currently seems to be pursuing a "dual policy" in Lebanon. On the one hand, it maintains a direct connection to Hizballah, completely by-passing the Lebanese government in the process. On the other hand, Tehran also has multiplied official contacts and exchanges of delegations with the authorities in Beirut. This two-track policy illustrates Iran's tendency to behave both as a traditional state, dealing with other countries through government-to- government channels, and as a revolutionary power which is prompt to ignore international legality and diplomatic conventions when they clash with the perceived duty to export revolutionary ideals and support like-minded movements inside other countries. This policy, however, can yield only limited results. As long as Iran backs Hizballah's "resistance activities" against Israel, it will alienate a Lebanese government that desperately would like to be able to restrain the radical Shiite organization, as a first step toward securing an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

D2d. From a Damascus-Tehran Axis to a Damascus-Riyadh Alliance

Excluding Syria, Saudi Arabia is the one Arab state whose influence in Lebanon has risen the most since 1989—even though

Riyadh's power over Lebanese politics pales in comparison with that exerted by Syria, or even Israel and Iran. The Saudi Kingdom is not a complete newcomer to Lebanese politics. In the 1970s, in an attempt to weaken the alliance between Palestinians and the Lebanese National Movement (in which forces inimical to Saudi Arabia were active), Riaydh had provided right-wing Maronite organizations with financial support.

Saudi Arabia's more decisive influence over the course of Lebanese history came through its sponsoring of the Ta'if Conference of October, 1989, and in building up Arab support for the agreement that followed. With the October, 1992 appointment of Mr. Rafiq Hariri as Prime Minister, Saudi influence in Lebanon reached its highest point yet. Mr. Hariri, who had made his fortune in Saudi Arabia, where he held citizenship, was known to be very close to King Fahd.

Mr. Hariri's appointment accelerated a trend toward the displacement of a decade-old Syrian-Iranian alliance by a new Riaydh-Damascus axis. In 1982-83, it was Syria that had allowed Iran to establish a foothold in Lebanon. Tehran's then-Ambassador to Damascus, Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, oversaw the development of Hizballah's network in the Biqa' Valley. For several years afterward, Syria and Iran found that their interests in Lebanon and the region often converged. In particular, Hafiz al-Asad cultivated his relationship with Tehran because it enabled him to weaken his longstanding rival in Baghdad, Saddam Hussein. Such considerations were decisive in the Syrian leader's willingness to let the Iranian regime carve for itself a sphere of influence in Lebanon.

However, the end of the Iran-Iraq war in the summer of 1988 suddenly diminished Iran's usefulness to the Syrian leader. At about the same time, Hizballah's growing political assertiveness and its willingness to challenge Syrian allies in Lebanon, especially Amal, began to worry Damascus.

Syria thus progressively took its distance from Iran. The alliance with Tehran was not broken, but it began to show signs of weakening. This phenomenon became even more pronounced in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War, for several reasons:

- The war had destroyed—for the time being at least—Iraq's ability to project power in the region. As a result, Syria felt less of a need to rely on Iran to counterbalance Iraqi ambitions.

- The Gulf War also had left the United States and its allies in the region, particularly Saudi Arabia, in an unprecedented position of influence. Hafiz al-Assad—always sensitive to the requirements of Realpolitik—understood that the balance of power had changed in favor of his old foes in the region. He became all the more aware of the necessity of a rapprochement with them after the Soviet Union finally

disintegrated in December 1991, depriving Syria from the support of its longstanding patron and leaving it potentially isolated.

In the new environment produced by the Gulf War and the Soviet Union's collapse, Syria's connection to Tehran—which was maintaining its confrontational attitude toward Washington and Israel—came to be seen in Damascus as more of a liability than an asset. While unwilling to severe its relationship to Iran, Hafiz al-Asad became convinced of the necessity to downplay it.

- Finally, the victory of the Israeli Labor party in the June 1992 parliamentary elections, followed by the establishment of a Labor-led, left-of-center government headed by Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, created a new situation on the Syrian-Israeli front. As the Israeli Prime Minister repeatedly alluded to his willingness to return the Golan Heights in exchange for a lasting peace with Syria, it became easier for Damascus to see close ties to Iran as a liability.

From Damascus' perspective, therefore, the alliance with Tehran may have outlived its purpose. As long as the Iranian government remains committed to wrecking the Arab-Israeli peace process, and as long as Hafiz al-Asad sees in continuing peace negotiations a reasonable prospect of retrieving control over the Golan Heights, the paths of Syria and Iran are likely to diverge increasingly, both in Lebanon and in the region as a whole.

It is also in this light that one should interpret Syria's attempt to coordinate its Lebanon policy with the Saudi Kingdom. By cementing its relationship with Riyadh, Damascus gains greater access to Washington and to Saudi financial backing. Syria's willingness to let such a pro-Saudi and pro-American figure as Rafiq Hariri become Prime Minister of Lebanon was undoubtedly a sign of Syrian goodwill toward Saudi Arabia and the United States. Tehran, by contrast, was publicly critical of the appointment, which was opposed by all eight Hizballah deputies in Lebanon's Parliament.

D3. Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations and Lebanon's Future

D3a. The Costs of the Status Quo Between Israel and Lebanon

The outcome of Middle East peace negotiations is the single most important variable affecting Lebanon's reconstruction prospects. As long as Israeli troops occupy southern Lebanon, Hizballah remains armed, and the situation between Israel and Lebanon is not normalized, Lebanon will continue to suffer from the following ills:

- Domestic and external confidence in the regime will remain low.

- The United States is unlikely to resume consular activities, lift the ban on the travel of its citizens to Lebanon, and provide the government in Beirut with substantial assistance.

- Security conditions in Lebanon will remain volatile.

- Foreign aid and investment will not be forthcoming in any significant amounts.

In short, Lebanon's economic and political recovery depends largely on what happens to two sets of relations: those between Lebanon and Israel, and those between the government in Beirut and Hizballah.

D3b. The Causes of Deadlock

One important obstacle to the normalization of Israeli-Lebanese relations has been disagreements between Beirut and Jerusalem over the preliminary steps needed to bring this process about. Lebanon traditionally has insisted on the unconditional implementation of U.N. Resolution 425—which calls for Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon—as a pre-condition for any improvement in relations between the two countries. Israel, by contrast, has argued that an Israeli withdrawal cannot take place until the government in Beirut disarms Hizballah. On September 15, 1993, Prime Minister Rabin even suggested that, should the Lebanese government disarm Hizballah within six months, Israel would withdraw from south Lebanon three months later. Two other demands frequently formulated by Jerusalem as prerequisites for an Israeli-Lebanon settlement have been the establishment of bilateral security arrangements between the two countries, and Beirut's commitment that members of the Israeli-sponsored South Lebanon Army (SLA) would not be punished after the Israeli army's withdrawal from the south.

Israeli demands have been consistently rejected by Lebanon. Beirut has argued that the future of SA members is a matter that cannot be pre-judged and must be left to the Lebanese government's discretion. It also has refused to enter into any security agreement with Jerusalem until the Israeli army is fully withdrawn from south Lebanon. The key to the Israeli-Lebanese stalemate, however, has been the issue of Hizballah's disarmament. The government in Beirut has been unable to satisfy this central Israeli request for the following reasons:

- Damascus has been reluctant to be deprived of the Hizballah card in its poker game with Israel. Thus, it has been unwilling to let the government in Beirut disarm Hizballah (as shown last August when it quickly reacted to limit the Lebanese Army troops deployment decided earlier by Prime Minister Hariri). It is commonly believed that, should Damascus really desire to see Hizballah disarmed, it could bring this about in a matter of days.

- Even in the absence of Syrian opposition, it would be politically very difficult for Mr. Hariri to confront Hizballah as long as Israel continues to occupy the south. It is Israel's very presence in the south that gives legitimation to Hizballah by enabling the organization to portray itself as the standard bearer of the struggle against foreign occupation. In these conditions, how could any government in Beirut afford to take on Hizballah to satisfy the request of the very foreign power which occupies part of its territory? The dilemma faced by the Lebanese government can thus be stated as follows: Israel will not withdraw from south Lebanon until Hizballah is neutralized as a politico-military force; but Hizballah cannot be neutralized as long as Israel occupies south Lebanon.

D3c. The Illusion of "Decoupling"

Throughout the summer and fall of 1993, signals sent by Israel and the United States sought to suggest that, in the face of continued Syrian ambivalence over the prospect of peace with Israel, it might be possible to "decouple" Syrian-Israeli and Syrian-Lebanese relations. In other words, progress might take place on the Israeli-Lebanese track even in the absence of movement on the Israeli-Syrian diplomatic front. A potential breakthrough between Beirut and Jerusalem, however, might be used to pressure Syria into making concessions in its talks with Israel. This was the rationale behind the "Lebanon First" option, which was floated during the summer of 1993, and which involved a gradual Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon, followed by the deployment of Lebanese Army troops in the area and the cessation of anti-Israeli activities by Hizballah and Palestinian groups. According to that scenario, the successful completion of this initial phase would then pave the road for a subsequent Syrian-Israeli agreement.

The prospect of decoupling became even more attractive to the Israeli Prime Minister in September, 1993, following his "Gaza-Jericho First Agreement" with PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat. Having just signed with Palestinian representatives an agreement that generated predictable controversy in Israel, Mr. Rabin was in no hurry to have to sell yet another possible deal with Syria, which would raise the politically difficult issue of an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

"Decoupling," however, was never in the cards, for the simple reason that Syria will not allow it. Accordingly, all senior government officials in Lebanon—including Prime Minister Hariri, President Hrawi, and Speaker Berri—have repeatedly emphasized over the last few months that a "Lebanon First" scenario is unthinkable, and that Lebanon would not sign a peace treaty with Israel without Syria. As Prime Minister Hariri declared last October, "If Syria progresses [in its negotiations with Israel], we will progress; if it stops, we will stop; and if Syria moves backwards, we will move backwards."

D3d. Lebanon and the "Gaza-Jericho First" Agreement

The September, 1993 agreement between Israel and the PLO was not well received in Lebanon. Much of the hostility was directed at the PLO, whose "go-it-alone" strategy was seen as having weakened considerably the bargaining position of Beirut and Damascus in their own talks with Israel. Lebanon felt betrayed by Yasir Arafat, whom it had stood by during the 1982 Israeli invasion (at a tremendous cost to the country and its people), but who now showed no compunction about abandoning Lebanon to its own fate. Throughout September, senior Lebanese government officials were commenting bitterly on how Arafat had even failed to inform them in August of the imminence of an Israeli-Palestinian agreement.

A sense of betrayal was not the only reason for the widespread animosity toward the PLO-Israeli deal. Even more decisive was the belief that, in the long run, the agreement would have negative consequences for Lebanon. Lebanese fear that the Gaza-Jericho agreement is the first step toward a solution of the Middle East conflict that will be achieved largely at their expense.

One important source of concern has been that the September deal fails to provide any answer to the question of what will happen to the 350,000 Palestinians in Lebanon, most of whom are refugees, or offspring of refugees, from the 1948 war. The agreement makes no reference to the Palestinians who live outside the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It is commonly believed that Israel will never allow significant number of diaspora Palestinians into the territories it now occupies. In any event, an already overcrowded West Bank-Gaza entity could not possibly absorb any significant inflow of population.

As a result, the PLO-Israeli deal raises the prospect that Lebanon may be stuck with the Palestinian refugees currently on its territory. This would raise a serious political problem: most Palestinians are Sunni Muslims, and their permanent resettlement in Lebanon would thus constitute a threat to the country's already delicate sectarian balance. More specifically, Lebanon could have to choose between granting citizenship to 350,000 Palestinians—which senior government officials have recently reaffirmed they will never do— or accepting the permanent presence on its territory of a large number of non-citizens, who might once again become embroiled in intra-Lebanese disputes, and exacerbate them, as in the early 1970s.

In Lebanon, the PLO-Israeli deal created much anger among Palestinians themselves, who see little benefit for themselves from a self-rule settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The opposition to the agreement was strongest in Beirut's three main refugee camps. But it was also noticeable in camps (such as the one in 'Ain al-Hilweh, near Sidon) which until then were believed to be generally pro-Arafat. This situation raises the prospect

that Palestinian groups in the south could step up their activities against Israel, which in turn would once again expose Lebanon to Israeli retaliation. It also suggests that Palestinian camps could prove a significant source of unrest following any future deal between Lebanon and Israel. The wretched existence of Palestinians in these overcrowded camps, and the abundance of weapons and strength of anti-Israeli feelings in them, creates a particularly explosive situation.

There is also justified fear in Lebanon that the West Bank's and Gaza Strip's demand for foreign aid will inevitably compete with those of Lebanon, resulting in diminished foreign assistance to Beirut. In the wake of last September's PLO-Israeli agreement, it seems clear that Arab and Wester donors, as well as international institutions such as the World Bank, will give priority to regional projects involving Israel, the West Bank, and Jordan over Lebanon's reconstruction. Indeed, the President of the World Bank, Lewis Preston, stated this unambiguously last October.

Even more damaging to Lebanon may be the emergence of an Israeli-Palestinian or Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, in a context in which economic barriers between Arab states and Israel would have been greatly diminished. Such a situation would raise the following dangers for Lebanon:

- It could make the country a dumping ground for Israeli goods with which Lebanon's devastated manufacturing sector may not be able to compete.

- It could deprive Beirut of the prospect of ever regaining its role as the region's financial center. Israeli banks pay higher interest on deposits than their Lebanese counterparts can afford. Their services are better. They are well connected to financial institutions worldwide. As a result, an economic confederation between Israel, Jordan, and the West Bank could easily replace Beirut in its former role as an intermediary between Arab and world financial markets. Israel's service sector in general could progressively assume the functions performed by Beirut's between 1943 and 1975, thus fulfilling a longstanding Israeli ambition. In short, an Israeli-Palestinian settlement might become the Trojan horse for Israel's ability to penetrate Arab markets and replace Lebanon in a role that the latter country, with its badly damaged economic infrastructure, can no longer play in the present conditions.

D3e. Israel, Syria, and Lebanon: Two Scenarios

As shown earlier, Lebanon's future will be shaped by the outcome of Israeli-Syrian negotiations. It is therefore necessary to highlight the likely political consequences for Lebanon of two broad scenarios: a normalization of relations between Damascus

and Jerusalem, and a serious breakdown in Syrian-Israeli peacemaking.

A peace treaty between Syria and Israel, which would make possible a simultaneous Israeli-Lebanese deal, would presumably involve the following:

- Return of the Golan Heights to Syria.
- Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon.
- A commitment by the Syrian and Lebanese governments to control or dismember Hizballah.
- Redeployment of Syrian forces from Beirut and the south to the Biqa', accompanied by a significant reduction in the level of Syrian troops in Lebanon.

In the long run, such a settlement would clearly benefit Lebanon. The country would regain control over the south. The Syrian presence would become less overwhelming, although the government in Beirut would almost certainly still have to answer to Damascus, and Lebanon would thus still fall very short of regaining its sovereignty. The weakening of Hizballah's military power and the normalization of the Lebanese-Israeli border would greatly improve security conditions in the south and indeed the entire country. This would heighten domestic and external confidence, lead to increased foreign aid and investment, and thus facilitate economic and political reconstruction.

In the short run, however, a settlement along the lines described above would also raise new problems.

- It would bring the government in direct conflict with Islamic groups that are opposed to any peace with Israel, but have so far adopted a neutral attitude toward the government (in part because, despite its participation in peace talks, that government has maintained a fairly consistent anti-Israeli rhetoric). Even within Amal, there would be considerable opposition to a deal with Israel. For reasons highlighted above, Palestinian camps might also become a source of turmoil.
- To compensate for the defection of key Muslim constituencies that have supported it until now, the government would have to find new domestic allies. This might be possible, to the extent that even a partial withdrawal of Syrian forces would enhance the government's ability to strike a new bargain with moderate Sunni and Shiite leaders, and with Christian politicians eager to reintegrate their community into the formal political game (e.g., Sa'adeh and his wing of the *Kata'ib* Party). Nevertheless, the process of

building new alliances could create some temporary political uncertainty in Lebanon.

- Finally, as Damascus would reduce its presence in Lebanon and redeploy its troops from Beirut and the south toward the Biqa', the Lebanese government would have to find new ways to ensure the security which Syrian troops so far have provided. In the current circumstances, it is not evident that the Lebanese government has the capacity to do so.

A serious breakdown in Israeli-Syrian negotiations, however, would be far more damaging to Lebanon (see section (a) above on the costs of the current status quo between Israel and Syria).

- If Damascus comes to feel that the return of the Golan Heights to Syrian control no longer constitutes a reasonable prospect, it will use its clients in Lebanon to harass Israel. At the very least, it will exert little effort to prevent Lebanon's "resistance movement" from launching guerrilla attacks on Israeli and SLA positions in the "security zone" and on towns in northern Israel. In other words, as they so often have in the past, Syrian-Israeli tensions will play themselves out in Lebanon.

- Similarly, if the Lebanese public is confronted with a total breakdown of the peace process, domestic pressure will mount on the government in Beirut to lend its official support to attacks on Israel--particularly in light of Jerusalem's July, 1993 "Operation Settling Accounts," which created new anger toward Israel. Since the Lebanese government cannot afford to lend its support to such raids, it will become more vulnerable to domestic charges of weakness toward Israel.

- When attacks on Israeli interests do take place, they will bring about Israeli retaliation, which in turn will nullify the government's efforts to improve security and political conditions in the country. Israeli retaliation will also strengthen anti- Israeli feelings, particularly in southern Lebanon, thus making peace with Israel— and the reconstruction of Lebanon's polity—an even more remote prospect.

SECTION III
WHO ARE THE PLAYERS?

Having reviewed the environment in which Lebanese politics takes place, we now turn to an examination of the country's political scene. Although the actors on that scene will be presented by sect, this method is not meant to imply that the main lines of division in the Lebanese polity today are exclusively or even primarily confessional. In fact, the following sections will highlight intra-confessional divisions.

For each sect, both key players and less influential participants will be identified, and the following questions addressed:

- What are these actors' primary objectives?
- What are the resources that they control and can mobilize to reach their goals?
- What are the constraints that limit their ability to achieve their ambitions?

A. The Politics of the Shiite Community

Representing 38 percent of the population, the Shiites now constitute by far the largest sect in Lebanon. However, as alluded to earlier, they did not benefit proportionally from the new political order established in the wake of the Ta'if Agreement, and thus are likely to press for a greater share of the Lebanese political pie. In their attempt to do so, they can mobilize the political resources controlled by the sect's three primary political groupings: Amal, Hizballah, and the community's most influential families. Before reviewing these three main political forces, the extent of the political transformations that affected the Shiite community in the 1980s must first be emphasized.

A1. The Rise of Shiite Power

It is well known that the Shiites moved from the periphery to the center of Lebanese politics in less than a decade. The contrast between two events perhaps best illustrates this phenomenon: in August, 1976 the Christian Phalangist militia evicted with relative ease and at little cost more than 100,000 powerless Shiites from their neighborhoods in the al-Nab'a district of northeast Beirut; in February, 1984, an alliance of Shiite and Druze militias seized control of West Beirut from the Lebanese government. What had been a quiescent and easily victimized community had become a powerful actor on the Lebanese political stage. The Shiites were now eager to assert their interests against those of communities and elites which had long been insensitive to their suffering.

What made this rise in Shiite power possible was a substantial increase in communal solidarity and in the community's ability to act as a cohesive political and military force. In short, when the civil war broke out in the mid-1970s, the Shiites exhibited a relatively low level of intra-Shiite political solidarity, and they did not control any powerful political or paramilitary organization of their own. The political apparatus of the community was still essentially limited to a few dominant families, which actually did a very poor job of promoting the community's interests. Thus, the community as a whole was without the organizational means to defend its interests, particularly in an increasingly violent environment. This situation was in sharp contrast with that which prevailed among the Maronites and Druze, who displayed strong level of political solidarity among themselves and could draw on the resources of well developed communal organizations (the Phalange Party and a well-organized Church for the Maronites, and the Progressive Socialist Party for the Druze).

Prior to the war, most politically active Shiites dissatisfied with the status quo had joined a variety of self-proclaimed "leftist" organizations that displayed a non-confessional, secular agenda. In fact, Shiites at the time formed a majority in virtually all of the country's self-described "progressive"organizations. As a result, however, the Shiites were scattered across the political spectrum. This explains why, when Shiite communal interests were at stake, as in the aforementioned case of the eviction of Shiites from al-Nab'a, the community could not muster the kind of politico-military support that would have enabled it to protect itself.

It is precisely this phenomenon that changed after 1978, when growing numbers of Shiites began to join specifically Shiite political organizations—and in particular Amal, the explicit purpose of which was to defend and promote specifically Shiite interests. As Amal's following developed, so did its organizational structure. What initially had been merely a "movement" became a more tightly organized politico-military structure, that controlled substantial resources and commanded the loyalty of its members. As will be shown below, the creation of Hizballah in 1983 followed a somewhat similar pattern, in that what was initially a fairly loosely organized political grouping became over time, and especially after 1988, the well-disciplined politico-military machine that it is today.

The result is that the Shiites now have two strong political organizations, each of which claims to embody and defend the community's interests. Ironically, this happens at a time when the Maronites—as will be shown below—have fallen victim to internal fragmentation, and as they lack the strong political infrastructure which for so long contributed to their power in the Lebanese polity.

A2. Amal

A2a. A Brief History of Amal

Amal was created in 1975 as the militia of the Movement of the Deprived (*Harakat al-Mahrumin*), which had been launched a few years earlier by Shiite cleric Imam Musa al-Sadr. Al-Sadr had intended the Movement of the Deprived to be a primarily, but not exclusively, Shiite movement that would put pressure on the Lebanese Government to engage in social reforms and improve the lot of the Shiite community. After the civil war broke out, the Movement of the Deprived became increasingly synonymous with its Amal militia.

Amal's political fortunes rose in 1978-79 as a result of three events: Israel's first invasion of Lebanon in March, 1978; the disappearance of Musa al-Sadr during an official visit to Libya in August, 1978; and the Iranian revolution. By the late 1970s, Amal had become the main representative of Shiite communal interests in Lebanon.

Since 1980, Amal has been led by Nabih Berri, a lawyer who since then has also been a Minister in several Lebanese governments. As Minister of the South in particular, Nabih Berri was given responsibility for initiating several important infrastructural and public services projects in southern Lebanon, which provided him with an opportunity to expand Amal's and his own influence. In October, 1992, Nabih Berri's career reached its highest point yet when he was elected Speaker of Parliament. It was the first time that the position was given to someone who did not belong to one of the traditionally dominant Shiite families.

Amal supported the Ta'if Agreement, but it is opposed to peace negotiations with Israel. Its main stronghold remains in southern Lebanon, although it is also influential in Beirut, despite Hizballah's power in the capital's southern suburbs.

A2b. Amal's Resources

In its attempt to maintain itself as the largest force within Lebanon's Shiite community, Amal benefits from several important assets.

- It enjoys the support of Syria (within limits of course, since Hafiz al-Assad would not wish to see Amal or its leader Nabih Berri become too powerful).
- In its struggle with Hizballah for the hearts and minds of Lebanon's Shiite community, it benefits from being seen as an indigenous Lebanese movement, whereas Hizballah is widely seen as an Iranian creation.
- Amal is far more acceptable to Sunnis and Maronites than Hizballah. This is a considerable advantage in Lebanon's multiconfessional society, where candidates

to Parliament must often rely for their election on the votes of individuals from outside their own community.

A2c. Constraints on Amal

- Syrian support for Amal undermines its image in a country in which anti-Syrian feelings run high.

- Dependence on Syrian backing also limits Amal's and Berri's freedom of maneuver. There is little Amal and its leader can do to oppose Syrian choices in Lebanon. This phenomenon was demonstrated once again in October, 1992, when Nabih Berri made public his displeasure with several of the appointments to Rafiq Hariri's government. Because these appointments were endorsed by Damascus, however, Berri's opposition to them had no impact (which in turn increased Berri's frustration).

- Since the mid-1980s, Amal has been badly hurt by Hizballah's inroads into many of its former strongholds. For several years now, Hizballah has been more influential than Amal in the Biqa' Valley. Hizballah also has displaced Amal as the strongest force in Beirut's southern suburbs. This phenomenon, which threatens Amal's power at the very heart of the country's capital, must be of particular concern to Amal's leaders. So far, the electoral law still provides for individuals to vote not in their place of residence, but in their place of origin. Thus, Hizballah's supporters in Beirut, who most often originate from a village or town in the south or the Biqa', go back to their hometown to vote. However, should the electoral law be changed so that individuals could vote in the place where they live and work, then Amal would be crushed electorally by Hizballah in the suburbs of Beirut, and its power base would become limited to southern Lebanon.

- Even in the south, Hizballah has expanded its sphere of influence. The deterioration of Amal's power relative to that of Hizballah was highlighted there in the summer of 1992, when Nabih Berri felt compelled to conclude a last-minute electoral alliance with Hizballah (Berri's list included four Amal and two Hizballah candidates). It is likely that, in the absence of this alliance, many of Berri's closest associates would not have been elected.

A3. Hizballah

A3a. A Brief History of Hizballah

While Amal's members generally share a predominantly secular outlook, Hizballah is the main mouthpiece for that segment of Lebanon's Shiite community which supports the establishment of a

theocratic state on the Iranian model. As mentioned earlier, Hizballah was established in 1982 around Ba'albak, in the Biqa', by a contingent of Revolutionary Guard sent by Iran. From the Biqa', which has remained its main base, Hizballah progressively expanded its influence to other predominantly Shiite areas. Within a few years, it became the most influential political force in Beirut's predominantly Shiite southern suburbs, which it wrested from Amal's control following armed clashes between the two militias in 1988. As mentioned above, it also has made inroads into the south, an area long considered to be Amal territory.

Since 1982, Hizballah has gone through two distinct phases. The first, which lasted until approximately 1989, was Hizballah's radical phase. It was then that the movement made a name for itself through such dramatic displays of power as the bombings of the U.S. Marines' barracks in Beirut in October, 1983, political assassinations, and the taking of Western hostages.

Since the early 1990s, however, Hizballah has moved toward greater pragmatism, and has sought to integrate itself partially into the Lebanese political game. In late 1989, even though it refused to condone the Ta'if Agreement, Hizballah nevertheless accepted to "coexist" with the Second Republic (on the tacit condition that it would not be disarmed). By and large, it has refrained from trying to destabilize efforts at political reconstruction, except with respect to its attacks on Israeli and SLA positions in Israel's "security zone." Hizballah's attempt to project itself as a more "respectable" and mainstream political organization gained new momentum with its release of the last few Western hostages in Lebanon in 1991, and with its decision to take part in the 1992 parliamentary elections.

Yet, the motives behind Hizballah's evolution should not be misunderstood. Nor should the extent of its move toward greater realism be exaggerated.

- First, in the area of relations with Israel, Hizballah remains as radical as ever. Its rhetoric still calls for the destruction of the Jewish state. Significantly, the most important reason that it gave in October, 1992 to justify its refusal to support the Hariri government was the fact that Hariri's statements did not give priority to the struggle against Israel. Today, Hizballah relies on an estimated 300-400 guerrillas in southern Lebanon to organize operations against Israel.

- Second, "greater pragmatism" does not necessarily mean "greater moderation." Hizballah's participation in the 1992 parliamentary elections, for instance, may only have been intended as a temporary and politically expedient strategy through which the organization sought to strengthen its position by gaining a foothold in state institutions. Its ultimate goal could still be

the destruction of the Second Republic, the establishment of an Islamic regime, and the end of multiconfessionalism in Lebanon.

- Third, even on domestic issues, Hizballah has shown that it can easily take positions that leave it way out of the Lebanese mainstream and in opposition to virtually all other Lebanese political organizations. In October, 1992, for instance, it was one of the very few parliamentary groups which voted to deny confidence to Rafiq Hariri's government. In short, Hizballah feels comfortable playing different roles, from political outcast to traditional political organization, and its rhetoric now alternates easily from the revolutionary and almost messianic discourse of its origins to more pragmatic and realistic pronouncements. Thus, it is still too early to know whether Hizballah will remain on the fringes of the Lebanese political system, whether it will move closer to its center, or whether it will continue to constantly change its behavior to suit its immediate interests.

- Finally, there is still an influential wing of "radical purists" within Hizballah. This group is led by a former Secretary General of the organization, Shaykh Sobhi Tufayli. It opposes the pragmatic course advocated by Hizballah's current Secretary General, Hassan Nasrallah (who was appointed following Israel's March 1992 assassination of former Hizballah Secretary General Shaykh Abbas Musawi).

Tensions within Hizballah reached a high point during the summer of 1992, when the organization had to decide whether or not to participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections. While Shaykh Sobhi Tufayli and other radical purists were vehemently opposed to participation and any other attempt to integrate Hizballah into the formal political game, the pragmatic wing led by Hassan Nasrallah favored stepping into the electoral contest. The pragmatists eventually prevailed, due in part to the support of Hizballah's spiritual leader in Lebanon, Shaykh Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, and to that of Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani. Their position was further strengthened by Hizballah's strong showing in the parliamentary elections, which appeared to vindicate their earlier plea for participation. As of early 1994, the pragmatists continue to dominate the organization, and they control most of the seats on its major policy-making body, the *Majlis al-Shura* (Consultative Council).

A3b. Hizballah's Resources

As it tries to displace Amal and emerge as the single most important political force within the Shiite community, Hizballah can draw on several resources.

Its most powerful asset is ideological, and consists of its strong anti-Israeli rhetoric. In a country which remains partially occupied by Israeli troops, and which has suffered greatly from Israeli raids for more than two decades, Hizballah's theme of armed resistance to Israel remains popular. Even when they disagree with Hizballah's methods and agenda, few southern Shiites fail to be sensitive to the contrast between the organization's dynamism and anti-Israeli fervor, and the Lebanese state's powerlessness to prevent Israeli attacks on Lebanese territory. Hizballah can provide victimized populations with a strong sense of empowerment.

Hizballah is also quick to capitalize on the complex problems that the Lebanese government faces, and which defy easy solutions. One current example is the issue of the reconstruction of Beirut's old center. Throughout the war, Israeli raids on southern villages led to a constant influx of Shiite refugees into Beirut. Many of these war refugees became squatters in the capital's poorest neighborhoods, located downtown and in the southern suburbs. Tens of thousands of other Shiite families also found refuge there after the Christian militias forced them out of their neighborhoods in East Beirut (as in the previously-mentioned case of the eviction by the Phalangist militias of more than 100,000 Shiites from the al-Nab'a neighborhood in northeast Beirut).

In late 1992, when the Hariri government unveiled its plan for the reconstruction of downtown Beirut, it became clear that many of these squatters would have to be evicted from their makeshift homes. This Shiite underclass, however, does not have any place to go. Its former homes were demolished by the Israeli army, or are located in what is now Israel's "security zone" in the south, or are now inhabited by Christian families in East Beirut.

In this context, Hizballah was quick to present itself as the defender of these squatters against a government it denounced as insensitive to their future. This stand costs Hizballah very little and enables it to gain support from the impoverished Shiite masses. It also puts Amal at a great disadvantage in its competition with Hizballah. Because Amal is now part of the political establishment and the government, it can easily be condemned by Hizballah for having been bought off by the system. The fact that Hizballah does not have to shoulder government responsibilities enables it to outbid its political rivals.

Hizballah is also the only militia not to have been disarmed, which can be a powerful political advantage. For instance, the armed presence of Hizballah supporters at voting stations was not foreign to the organization's success during the Summer 1992 parliamentary elections. In several districts of the Biqa' in particular, Hizballah members resorted to intimidation of political opponents.

Hizballah has become a very well organized and effective political machine. For years, the Hizballah label remained little more than an umbrella for a variety of loosely organized groups that shared broadly similar goals, and recognized themselves in the philosophy of Hizballah's spiritual leader, Shaykh Fadlallah. After 1988, however, Hizballah's structure was tightened and centralized, largely at the urging of Iran. Hizballah is now a very cohesive organization, and the social and political control it exerts in certain areas is impressive. The summer 1992 parliamentary elections also demonstrated that the Hizballah machine can deliver the vote of its dedicated supporters. This turned into a major advantage at a time when, by contrast, many groups opposed to Hizballah's agenda were clearly hurt by the widespread political apathy that prevailed within the electorate.

Most importantly, Hizballah benefits from the many years it has spent working at the grass-roots level to provide welfare and relief services. Prior to the outbreak of the civil war, the government had neglected the poor, predominantly rural and Shiite areas of the south and the Biqa' Valley. The growing paralysis of the state after 1975 only exacerbated this phenomenon—precisely at a time when, due to the hostilities or to Israeli raids in the south, the population's social needs were growing.

From 1983 onward, Hizballah proved remarkably effective at providing the populations of the areas where it was active with a vast array of social, educational, and health services. This factor has contributed greatly to its growing appeal over the years, particularly among the more impoverished segments of the population. During the harsh 1991-92 winter which hit the Biqa' Valley particularly hard, Hizballah stepped into the vacuum left by the government and organized teams of relief workers who cleared roads blocked by snow, and distributed blankets and food to the poor. A few years earlier, in 1988, when intra-Christian clashes in East Beirut had left the residents of Beirut's southern suburbs without potable water and electricity, Hizballah had provided generators and ensured a daily replenishment of local reservoirs, by bringing water to the suburbs by truck. Most recently, in the wake of Israel's assault on southern Lebanon in late July-early August, 1993, Hizballah has helped rebuild several villages destroyed by the Israelis. According to local reports, this has helped the organization regain some of the support it had lost for bringing about the Israeli attack in the first place.

Thus, Hizballah currently works not only as a political party (it was officially licensed as such in 1992), but also as a charitable works agency that runs a variety of social programs at the local level. Some of the services offered by Hizballah are free, including the taxi service for farm workers which Hizballah runs in the Biqa' to bring farm hands back and forth between their villages and the fields where they work. Other free services provided by Hizballah members include digging wells or repairing homes damaged by Israeli raids.

Hizballah also provides subsidized services and goods. For example, it manages supermarkets that sell food at discounted prices. It runs a network of schools that provide a low-cost education which is often of higher quality than in state-run schools. It manages dispensaries and two major hospitals, the Imam Hospital in Ba'albak and the Almighty Prophet Hospital in southern Beirut. Even those services and goods for which Hizballah usually charges a fee are provided free to impoverished families, including medicine and hospitalization in Hizballah's hospitals and clinics, education in the schools run by Hizballah cleric, and food packages in Hizballah-run supermarkets.

A3c. Constraints on Hizballah

The most significant constraint under which Hizballah operates is its heavy reliance on Iranian and, especially, Syrian goodwill. Tehran provides logistical assistance, political advice, and diplomatic, military, and financial support. Syria, for its part, determines how much freedom of maneuver Hizballah enjoys in Lebanon.

It was Syria which decided that, unlike the other militias, Hizballah would not be disarmed in the course of the implementation of the Ta'if Agreement. Hafiz al-Assad reasoned that an armed Hizballah presence in south Lebanon would be a convenient way for Syria to pressure Israel into concessions, or to punish it in the event of a breakdown in the two countries' peace negotiations. In addition, disarming Hizballah would have put Damascus at odds with the regime in Tehran.

Hizballah, however, remains highly dependent upon Damascus. Since it conducts its activities in Syrian-controlled territory, it must receive Syria's tacit permission prior to launching raids on the security zone or northern Israel. Damascus also decides whether Iranian weapons and material can reach Hizballah headquarters in the Syrian-controlled Biqa' Valley.

Hizballah's limited freedom of maneuver vis-à-vis Damascus was demonstrated in two recent incidents.

- In early August, 1993, when Syrian pressure was instrumental in convincing it to agree to a cease-fire with Israel. At the time, it was reported that not only had Hizballah committed itself to ending its activities on Israel proper (not on the Israeli-occupied "security zone" inside Lebanon), but that a "general understanding" between Israel, Syria, and the Lebanese government also had been reached. According to it, Syria and Lebanon had agreed to take certain unspecified measures to restrain the activities of Hizballah.

Continued Syrian support for an armed Hizballah presence in the south, however, is predicated on the outcome of Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations. If Damascus can regain control

over the Golan Heights in exchange for a disarmament of Hizballah, it certainly will accept the deal. At that point, Hizballah may still be able to rely on Iranian support, but that will not enable the organization to maintain its current role. It may even be that Tehran will be unwilling to compromise its relationship with Damascus merely for Hizballah's sake.

- Another incident which illustrates Hizballah's inability to oppose Syrian choices in Lebanon was the Lebanese army's forceful repression of a Hizballah demonstration organized on September, 13, 1993 (the day PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shook hands in Washington). The Lebanese government had announced earlier that, for security reasons, it would not permit any demonstration against the Gaza-Jericho Agreement. When Hizballah ignored this warning, and proceeded to organize a march against the accord in Beirut's Ghobeiri quarter, Lebanese Army troops fired upon demonstrators. Nine were killed and about forty injured. In Beirut, the action was widely interpreted as Damascus's way of telling Hizballah that it would not let the Shiite organization disrupt any possible move toward a settlement that would be acceptable to Syria.

A4. The Prominent Shiite Families

In addition to Amal and Hizballah, a third important force in Shiite politics consists of families which have long been influential in Lebanon, including the al-Husseini in the Biqa', the Baydun in Beirut, and the al-Zayn, Usayran, al-As'ad, and al-Khalil in the south. In fact, prior to the outbreak of the civil war—when Amal and Hizballah did not exist—these families had a lock on Shiite politics.

The civil war, however, severely diminished their political clout. Many of their leading representatives were denounced for their past insensitivity to Shiite suffering, and for their unwillingness to use their influence in Beirut to try to improve the situation of their community. In an increasingly violent environment in which militias now set the tone of Lebanese politics, the formerly dominant Shiite families receded in the background.

Their political prospects were further dimmed by Syria's defeat of General Aoun in October, 1990, and by the subsequent increase in Syrian influence over Lebanese affairs. Among the Shiites as in other communities, this new situation was bound to benefit disproportionately longstanding Syrian allies, especially Amal.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the 1992 elections witnessed several longstanding Shiite political bosses struggling for their political survival. The list led by former Speaker of Parliament Hussein al-Husseini, for instance, suffered a crushing defeat.

Hussein al-Husseini himself was barely elected. In mid-October 1992, approximately a month after the elections, al-Husseini went to Damascus, where he realized that he did not enjoy strong Syrian support. This convinced him not to run for Speaker again. He even boycotted the opening session of Parliament, when Nabih Berri, Amal's leader, was elected as new Speaker.

The fact that the Shiite post of Speaker of Parliament had shifted from al-Husseini, the scion of a powerful landed family of the Biqa', to Nabih Berri, who hails from a very modest background, was highly significant. It reflects the political changes that have been at work among the Shiites, and it symbolizes the ascent of a new leadership within the community.

Also revealing was the defeat of Kamil al-As'ad and his entire list in the south. For more than four decades, Kamil al-As'ad had been the undisputed Shiite leader of the south. On election day, however, his list was wiped out by Amal's, led by Nabih Berri. Prior to the outbreak of the civil war, it would have been entirely inconceivable that Kamil al-As'ad could ever have been defeated in a parliamentary election. His wealth, patronage, and contacts with local officials and the central bureaucracy in Beirut would have ensured his re-election. Al-As'ad's defeat was also the end of an era in Shiite politics.

More generally, analysts of the 1992 elections noted the contrast between, on the one hand, Amal's overwhelming electoral victory in the south and Hizballah's strong showing in several districts, and, on the other hand, the poor performance of many of the representatives of the families that traditionally had dominated Shiite politics. It is thus easy to see the 1992 elections as the death-knell of a landed elite's centuries-old political power. This is what Speaker Nabih Berri implied when he declared that the elections had "put an end to 400 years of political feudalism in Lebanon."

Berri's claim, however, may be premature. The erosion of the political influence of the old Shiite families, although real, should not be exaggerated.

- First, the poor performance of many of the representatives of leading Shiite families was due to the particular circumstances in which the elections took place. In some instances, intimidation by Amal and Hizballah followers played a major role. This for instance appears to have been the case in the Ba'albak-Hermel district (in the Biqa'), where the defeat of the list headed by Hussein al-Husseini was partially due to intimidation and fraud by Hizballah members.

- Second, the Christian boycott of the elections played a role in the electoral success of Amal and Hizballah. Had Christians taken part in the election, they would have been much more likely to vote for members of

traditional families than for Amal, and they definitely would not have voted for Hizballah candidates. In the south, for instance, Kamil al-As'ad's list would have received many Christian votes, and the same is true for Hussein al-Husseini's list in the Biqa'.

- Third, it is important to remember that Berri's list included several representatives of traditionally dominant southern Shiite families, including Ali Usayran, Ali al-Khalil, and Abd al-Latif al-Zayn. While these individuals would probably not have been elected without Berri's support, they were nevertheless included in Amal's list because of the many votes they could still deliver.

- Similarly, in Beirut, one should note the excellent performance of Muhammad Yusuf Baydun, from the capital's most prominent Shiite family. He was elected on the Hoss list with some 23,559 votes, far outdistancing the only other elected Shiite candidate, Muhammad Birjawi (Hizballah), who received only 12,666 votes.

Overall, the extent of the erosion of the political power of landed families was uneven. While some traditional Shiite leaders (e.g., Kamil al-As'ad) are unlikely to stage a comeback, others should not be counted out of the future of Lebanese politics.

B. Sunni Politicians and Groups

Unlike the Shiites (with Amal and Hizballah), the Druze (with the Progressive Socialist Party), and the Maronites (with the Church and, to a lesser extent, the Phalange Party and the Lebanese Forces), the Sunnis lack strong organizations that can be mobilized for political purposes. Instead, Sunni politics still revolve, as they always have, around a few prominent personalities. Even then, the Sunnis' ability to defend their communal interests on the Lebanese political scene is hampered by the loss of two of the leading Sunni politicians of the pre-war period: former Prime Minister Rashid Karame, who was assassinated in 1987, and former Prime Minister Sa'ib Salam, who now lives in exile in Paris. No Sunni politician has yet emerged with the stature to replace these two individuals.

Political actors currently active in the Sunni community can be divided into three main groups:

- Sunni politicians who are willing to work within the parameters defined by Syria

- Sunni politicians who are opposed to the extent of Syria's current influence in the country

- And various Sunni fundamentalist groups, which are particularly active in Tripoli and Beirut, the two

cities where the largest concentrations of Sunnis can be found

B1. Pro-Syrian Sunni Politicians

B1a. Three Prime Ministers

Two influential pro-Syrian Sunni politicians are Umar Karame and Rashid al-Solh, both of whom were Prime Ministers following the Ta'if Agreement (respectively from December 1990 until May 1992, and from May until October 1992). Another important figure in the community today is of course current Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

Umar Karame, a scion of the politically dominant Sunni family of Tripoli, is the brother of deceased former Prime Minister Rashid Karame. He has long been closely identified with Syria. In fact, his appointment as Prime Minister in December 1990 was announced in Syrian newspapers before it was made in Beirut!

As mentioned earlier, Umar Karame was forced to step down in May, 1992, following riots and demonstrations triggered by widespread discontent over falling living standards. That incident—and more generally the widespread perception that he had not been a particularly effective Prime Minister—did much to damage his national image. Nevertheless, he remains a powerful figure, especially in Tripoli, where his list scored an impressive success in the 1992 elections. Karame himself received the most votes (72,358) in Tripoli, and all other elected candidates belonged to his list. He was the third largest recipient of votes for the entire Governorate of the North, after Nayla Mu'awwad (widow of assassinated President René Mu'awwad) and Sulayman Tony Franjieh (grandson of former President Sulayman Franjieh), both of whom were elected on his list. Because he controls one of the largest blocs in parliament, Umar Karame will remain influential in national politics.

Rashid al-Solh is another Sunni leader with close ties to Syria. Born in a relatively un-influential branch of the prestigious al-Solh family, he was brought up in the home of former Prime Minister Sami al-Solh. When the latter died in 1968, he inherited his political mantle in Beirut. While still a politician of secondary standing among the Sunnis, he was picked as Prime Minister by President Sulayman Franjieh in October, 1974. He held the Premiership until May, 1975, when he resigned after unsuccessful efforts to prevent and then contain civil hostilities.

In May, 1992, he was selected to succeed outgoing Prime Minister Umar Karame. At a time of rising social discontent, this choice reflected, in part, the new Prime Minister's reputation as a champion of labor and the working class. During his short tenure, however, Rashid al-Solh alienated many—including within his own community—because of his perceived subservience to the

regime in Damascus. In particular, his insistence on proceeding with parliamentary elections in the summer of 1992 generated much controversy and polarization.

As a result, his list did very poorly in Beirut—especially considering that he was still Prime Minister at the time of the elections. Although he was elected, he received the least amount of votes among all elected Sunni candidates (11,428). No other Sunni on his list made it to Parliament. Such results point to the extent of the rejection of al-Solh by Beirut's Sunni electorate, whose votes instead went mostly to the list led by Salim al-Hoss. Largely discredited within his own community, and widely perceived as a "has-been," Rashid al-Solh is an unlikely candidate for a political come-back.

Current Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, too, has proven willing to work within the confines of a strong Syrian presence in the country. However, contrary to many other politicians, Hariri is not seen as a mere puppet of Syria. In the public's eyes, his Syrian connection is strongly balanced by his many other international connections, including those to the Saudi regime, the Americans, and right-wing French politicians such as Jacques Chirac. Since Rafiq Hariri is the dominant figure in Lebanese politics today, it is essential to identify the resources on which he can draw, as well as the constraints under which he operates.

B1b. Hariri's Resources

Mr. Hariri's single most important asset may be the widespread and probably accurate perception that, under the current conditions, no one could do as much as he can for Lebanon's political and economic reconstruction. It is hard to think of anyone who could generate the kind of confidence that Hariri inspires, both at home and abroad. Significantly, when a serious governmental crisis last August briefly raised the prospect of Hariri's resignation, Lebanon's Central Bank was forced to spend over $ 40 million in one single day to prevent a collapse of the Lebanese pound.

Prime Minister Hariri also benefits from Syria's repeated statements that he will remain in office until the 1995 Presidential elections. This enables him to focus on reconstruction without having to worry excessively about political maneuvering. It also provides him with the time needed for several of his programs to begin to yield concrete results.

Although he no longer is as strong politically as he was a year ago, the Prime Minister still enjoys substantial popular support and a reputation for honesty and integrity. The population by and large likes his discourse about the need to clean up corruption and improve the autonomy and performance of state institutions, and believes him to be sincere. Even Maronites are often well disposed toward him.

Hariri's best known asset is of course his great wealth, which is essential to his reputation as someone who can fix problems and get things done. It also protects him somewhat from charges of corruption (presumably, someone as rich as Hariri hardly needs to get involved in politics to fill his pockets, and is less likely than most other politicians to engage in illicit financial activities).

Hariri's wealth also provides him with various ways to buy influence and loyalty, not only for himself but for his personal associates as well. The Hariri Foundation has tens of thousands of beneficiaries. Similarly, the inclusion of Rafiq Hariri's sister, Bahiya Hariri, on Berri's Amal list in the elections of 1992 (and her landslide election with more than 117,000 votes in Sidon) was largely due to the fact that she had been funding for years a wide array of social services, including the construction of schools, thanks to monies provided by the foundation controlled by her brother.

Finally, Hariri can draw on a highly developed network of international connections across the Middle East and Western capitals. The international community in general as highly supportive of his ascent to the Premiership, and has given him high marks for what he has achieved so far, especially considering the constraints under which he operates, and which will now be examined.

B1c. Constraints on Hariri

Syrian power in Lebanon constitutes the single most important constraint on Mr. Hariri. First, many Lebanese, especially Christians, see the Prime Minister as being too close to Damascus. This constantly undermines the legitimacy of his government. Second, Rafiq Hariri's real authority is limited to economic affairs. Political and security issues are decided in Damascus. It is not clear, however, that the Prime Minister can succeed in the economic realm without being given a mandate over the country's other problems. For instance, there is little Hariri can do about Hizballah's armed presence in the south, Israel's occupation of part of southern Lebanon, and clashes between Hizballah and Israel. Yet, such factors impinge greatly on the economy by undermining public confidence in the government's ability to maintain order.

Rafiq Hariri's freedom of maneuver is also limited by Elias Hrawi and Nabih Berri. Although the Prime Minister is clearly the dominant actor in the system, his power is nevertheless checked by the authority of the President and the Speaker of Parliament. This was shown in 1993 by repeated disagreements between "the three presidents" over high level civil service appointments. On several occasions, President Hrawi or Speaker Berri have been able to prevent Prime Minister Hariri from having his way.

Rafiq Hariri is under great pressure to produce rapid improvements in people's standards of living. His appointment

initially gave rise to excessive expectations. In a country which has demonstrated an unfortunate tendency to believe that strong leaders can produce miracles, Rafiq Hariri was seen as Lebanon's ultimate savior. As mentioned earlier, he did not help himself when, upon assuming office, he promised that the Lebanese would feel the positive results of his government's policies by the spring of 1993. Predictably, the very modest improvements that were indeed visible by the spring did not measure up to the hopes that people had placed in the Hariri government.

Some fifteen months after he was chosen as Prime Minister, many Lebanese feel that the Prime Minister is not delivering fast enough. As of January, 1994, there is rising social discontent with low salaries, which in part are due to Mr. Hariri's tight monetary policy. Unless Lebanese begin to see concrete evidence that their sacrifices so far have been justified, Mr. Hariri will soon find himself in trouble.

Many criticize what they see as Mr. Hariri's heavy-handed style and authoritarian proclivities. Others feel that he is trying to run the state as he would one of his many corporations, that he displays a tendency to throw money at problems, and that he behaves more as a businessman than as a statesman. There is a widespread awareness that Hariri has failed to articulate a clear vision of Lebanon's future, and that he may lack one.

There is growing unease with the confusion between Hariri-the-Prime Minister and Hariri-the-businessman who stands to benefit millions of dollars through the public projects which will be carried out by private companies that he owns, controls, or in which he is an important share-holder. This is particularly true with respect to current plans for the reconstruction of downtown Beirut.

Potential confusion between public and private interests is not the only area in which Hariri's status as both Prime Minister and multi-millionaire businessman has created controversy. His active business involvement in television stations such as Télé Liban (a public-private company in which he holds 49 percent of the private shares) or Future Television Station (which he controls) has generated public criticism as well. Some have accused the Prime Minister of using to his political advantage his position as a media entrepreneur. Others have interpreted recent governmental efforts to regulate broadcasts on the Arabsat satellite as an attempt by Hariri to provide his Future Television Station with a broadcast monopoly. In late December, 1993, such objections forced the Prime Minister to devote an entire press conference to defend himself against charges that his control over Lebanon's financial, economic, and political life has become overwhelming and dangerous.

There is substantial political opposition to Hariri, both overt and latent. First, large segments of the Maronite and Shiite communities worry about the extent of his power. They fear that he could use his authority against their communal interests,

and that he may have set a dangerous precedent as a powerful Sunni Prime Minister, backed by foreign powers, and whose authority eclipses that of the President and Speaker.

Second, there also has been much opposition to Hariri among the members of his very cabinet, as shown by the August, 1993 governmental crisis which would certainly have brought down the government had it not been for Syrian intervention. Particularly significant have been clashes between Mr. Hariri and his Defense Minister (Mohsen Dalloul), Minister of Information (Michel Samaha), Interior Minister (Bishara Merhej), and former Minister of Electricity (George Frem). Such conflicts have limited Prime Minister Hariri's ability to turn his ideas into policies, and they have slowed down government action in general.

Third, even within the Sunni community, Hariri faced unexpected opposition during the second half of 1993. The Popular Congress of Islamic and National Forces, an umbrella organization for various Sunni associations, has clashed with the Prime Minister on several occasions. More generally, Hariri has failed to impose his leadership on the Sunni community. This in part reflects his unwillingness to become a communal leader and a traditional politician. But it also reflects his own limitations: he is not a Beiruti; he finds it hard to relate to, and understand, the capital's Sunni street; and, in sharp contrast with the old Sunni leadership of Beirut, he is not accessible to the public.

The preceding point raises a broader issue: Hariri lacks an organized political base. Support for his reforms may be widespread, but it is also amorphous. This phenomenon greatly complicates the task of the Prime Minister, since in order to implement his program he must fight entrenched and well organized interests, and therefore desperately needs an organized political infrastructure of his own.

In this respect, one must stress an important difference between former President Fuad Shihab and Rafiq Hariri, whose blueprints for modernizing the Lebanese state are sometimes compared. Fuad Shihab came to power in 1958 with an organized force behind him: the army and its intelligence service (the infamous Deuxiéme Bureau). By contrast, Rafiq Hariri cannot count on the undivided loyalty of one single state institution. His wealth and international connections may be considerable, but they are fluid resources that do not convert automatically and easily into the organized political support he may need to succeed. As the Lebanese Prime Minister contemplates his future, he is probably well aware that Fuad Shihab's undoing was due not only to the determination and power displayed by his enemies, but also to the General's inability to institutionalize support for his reforms.

The absence of an organized political base creates a dilemma for Hariri. Since he cannot rely on any single political organization to mobilize support for his reform agenda, he has

attempted to fill the administration with his own men, often individuals recruited from the corporations he controls. This practice, however, has made Hariri increasingly vulnerable to charges of nepotism and hypocrisy. Many Lebanese argue that, while Hariri claims to aim at the elimination of cronyism and clientelism, he resorts to these very same practices to consolidate his personal control over the state.

Overall, therefore, while most Lebanese are still willing to give Mr. Hariri the benefit of the doubt, criticism has begun to accumulate. There is real disappointment in his government. The Prime Minister's image has deteriorated significantly. While Parliament has refrained from seeking to embarrass the government, some MPs are quick to try to capitalize on public impatience with the slow pace at which the economy is improving and basic services are being restored.

Some feel that Hariri is running out of steam. Others, who always doubted that the Prime Minister could succeed in his twin goals of revitalizing the economy and modernizing the Lebanese state, see their earlier suspicions confirmed. Most fear that, although Hariri is a well-intentioned and capable man, he cannot possibly overcome the obstacles created by Syrian hegemony in the country, Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, and the deeply entrenched negative features of Lebanese political culture—"amoral familism," nepotism, warlordism, corruption, sectarianism, and the "parcelization" of the state. Hariri, in short, still has to prove himself. While most Lebanese continue to believe that he is their best chance of rebuilding the country, doubts in his ability to solve Lebanon's complex problems have grown drastically over the last few months.

B2. Sunni Politicians Opposed to Syria's Current influence in Lebanon

There exists within the Sunni community a very strong opposition to Syrian power in the country. This was demonstrated when perhaps as little as 20 percent of the Sunni population of West Beirut took part in the 1992 elections. Contrary to some perceptions, therefore, the boycott was by no means a specifically Christian phenomenon.

One influential Sunni politician who opposed the timing of the 1992 elections was Tammam Salam. Tammam Salam owes his power to his membership in one of Beirut's traditionally dominant Sunni families, to his father's prestigious political past, and to the fact that he is President of the *Maqasid* Benevolent Society, which provides him with resources that he can distribute to clients.

On August 16, 1992, from his exile in Paris, former Prime Minister Sa'ib Salam called for the postponement of the elections. The following day, Tammam, his son, announced that he had decided to withdraw his candidacy in Beirut—arguing that, considering the extent of Christian opposition to them, elections

would threaten the still fragile national reconciliation begun in Ta'if. As Tammam Salam pulled out of the race, so did many of his political allies. Yet, although they are not represented in the current parliament, the followers of Tammam Salam constitute a real political force within the Sunni community, and they undeniably will play a role in shaping the future of the country.

Even more influential is Salim al-Hoss, a former Prime Minister of Lebanon between 1987 and 1990. Although al-Hoss shared many of Tammam Salam's misgivings about the way in which the elections were being imposed by the Syrians and their allies in Lebanon, in complete disregard of a large current within Lebanese public opinion, he nevertheless decided to take part in them.

What followed proved he had made the right choice: Salim al-Hoss emerged as the clear winner of the elections in Beirut. His list soundly defeated that led by then-Prime Minister Rashid al-Solh. Of all the candidates elected in Beirut, Salim al-Hoss received by far the most votes, easily outdistancing the second and third best vote-receivers, who were also elected on his list. The contrast between Salim al-Hoss's overwhelming election and the poor performance of Rashid al-Solh underlined the extent to which a majority of the Sunni electorate felt deeply alienated from the government, bitter about Syrian domination, and opposed to the timing of the elections.

Salim al-Hoss remains an important player in Sunni politics. His main liability is that he is more a technocrat than a politician, and has not always proven adept at playing the Lebanese political game. However, at a time when the Lebanese public shows widespread disaffection from the political class, this also may be an advantage. Al-Hoss's reputation for integrity, tolerance, and competence are formidable assets in an environment in which few politicians can boast such credentials. In a world of self-serving politicians, Al-Hoss is widely regarded as having the qualities of a statesman, interested first and foremost in promoting the welfare of his country. He always has emphasized conciliation, consensus-building, compromise, and dialogue. For instance, even at a time when virtually all Sunni politicians had burned their bridges to Bashir Gemayel, in August 1982, Salim al-Hoss still maintained lines of communication with the leader of the Lebanese Forces, and he remained in touch with Bashir until the latter's assassination.

He also knows how to surround himself with competent and like-minded individuals, regardless of confession. His list included individuals such as Joseph Mghayzil (a Greek Catholic lawyer who is also the President of Lebanon's League of Human Rights), Issam Na'man (a Druze intellectual well-known for his leadership role in several voluntary associations and intellectual circles), and Ousama Fakhoury, a highly respected Sunni physician active in social causes.

Al-Hoss controls one of the largest blocs in Parliament (*qutlat al-Hoss*). He is the leader of what one might call "the constructive opposition" to Prime Minister Hariri's government.

B3. Sunni Fundamentalist Groups

Sunni fundamentalist groups are relative newcomers to Sunni politics. They first appeared in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and then mushroomed during the 1980s. The leaders of these groups form a new elite of lower-middle and middle class origins, which has challenged the traditionally Sunni establishment. Like Hizballah, these groups have been building support through the many social programs they run at the grass-roots level. Unlike Hizballah, however, they rarely have a well-defined political platform and agenda, and they refrain from using explicitly religious slogans, preferring instead to run on their demonstrated ability to provide health and educational services.

For the first time in Lebanon's history, two of these groups gained seats in the parliament elected in 1992: The Islamic Society (*al-jama'a al-islamiyya*), based in Tripoli, and the Beirut-based Association of Islamic Charitable Works (*al-jam'iyyat al-a'mal al-islamiyya*). Of these two groups, the Islamic Society is clearly the more influential. It is led by Shaykh Fathi Yakan, an influential Sunni cleric whose appeal extends beyond his base in northern Lebanon. The Islamic Society actually operates as an umbrella for several groups, including the Muslim Brothers and the Islamic Unification Movement (*al-tawhid al-islami*), which was formed in the early 1980s and is influential in and around Tripoli.

Three candidates of the Islamic Society were elected to the 1992 Parliament: Shaykh Fathi Yakan himself in Tripoli, As'ad Harmmousch in Dinniyeh, and Zuhayr Ubaydi in Beirut. As in the case of Hizballah, these three candidates—as well as that of the Association of Islamic Charitable works—benefited from the Christian boycott, which denied votes to their secular opponents.

In the wake of the September, 1993 PLO-Israeli agreement, *al-jama'a al-islamiyya* appears to have gained some support among Palestinians in the refugee camps. Significantly, militants at the 'Ain al-Hilweh camp near Sidon invited a prominent member of the group to join Palestinian clerics in leading a march against the agreement. As Palestinian opposition to an Israeli-Palestinian peace takes on an increasingly pronounced Islamic character in Lebanon, one cannot dismiss the prospect that Sunni fundamentalist groups could establish a foothold in the refugee camps, which provide a fertile ground for their anti-Israeli rhetoric.

Finally, the al-Habashi group, based in Beirut, also deserves mention. The name of this association comes from its founder, Shaykh Abdallah al-Hirari, who goes by the nickname of al-Habashi ("The Ethiopian"), to refer to his origins. Al-Hirari settled in Beirut in the 1950s, and is now in his eighties. His

favorite themes have strong anti-Shiite and anti-Maronite overtones. Neither he nor his spiritual heir apparent, Shaykh al-Halabi, who is now the real leader of the group, ran in the 1992 elections. In Beirut, the association endorsed the candidacy of Dr. Adnan Traboulsi, an athlete by profession, who was the only candidate elected on the Islamic Charitable Works Association list.

C. The Maronite Community

Representing only 20 percent of the population (compared to 23 percent for the Sunnis and 38 percent for the Shiites), the Maronites now constitute the smallest of the three major sects in the country. In the post-Ta'if era, they also have lost much of their former power and prerogatives. In a country in which the balance of power has irremediably shifted toward the Muslims, Christians in general fear for their future. Considering the extent of their community's disorientation, fragmentation, and political powerlessness, they indeed have reason for concern.

C1. The Politics of Fear and Marginalization

The marginalization of the Maronite community constitutes a key obstacle to governmental reconstruction and the normalization of Lebanese political life. Maronites feel excluded from the institutional game. To the extent that they are formally represented in the institutions of the state, it is by individuals who lack credibility within their own community, largely because they are willing to operate within the constraints set by Syria. This statement applies to President Elias Hrawi as much as it does to most Maronite MPs.

For political reconstruction to succeed, the Maronites must be re-integrated into the political process. Unfortunately, three factors at least make this an unlikely prospect in the short term: the community's demoralization, its lack of leadership, and its internal fragmentation.

C1a. Demoralization

Maronites interpret political developments in Lebanon since 1990 as proof that, following fifteen years of civil war, they lost out to the Muslim majority. They think that the current government is insensitive to their needs and aspirations. More than ever, they view themselves as a beleaguered minority, whose future in Lebanon is bleak. They feel increasingly insecure in a country which they see as being progressively "Islamized" through such processes as: the drastic redistribution of power in favor of the Muslim community following the Ta'if Agreement; the Syrians' conspicuous presence and influence over the government; increasing real estates sales to Muslim foreigners (especially Kuwaitis and Saudis), especially in areas that traditionally had been predominantly Christian; rising Islamic militancy; and the presence of Islamic fundamentalist candidates in Parliament.

Thus, most Christians see the post-Ta'if order as a barely disguised attempt to institutionalize and legitimize the domination of Christians by Muslims. Even those who believe that the Ta'if Agreement provides an acceptable blueprint for the reconstruction of the Lebanese polity feel very bitter about the agreement's uneven implementation, which has hurt Christian interests far more than Muslim ones. The Christians' alienation from the political process was highlighted dramatically by their decision to boycott the 1992 parliamentary elections. One unintended consequence of the boycott, however, was that it merely reinforced their political marginalization.

The demoralization of Christians could very well reveal itself to be the death knell of efforts to rebuild the state. Lebanon cannot succeed if one-fifth of its population—and a segment of it that has many of the skills and resources required for economic reconstruction—feels excluded from the existing order. In addition, until Christians in Lebanon are reassured about their future, the large, wealthy, and influential Lebanese Christian community abroad will not invest in or return to Lebanon, where their expertise and capital are badly needed. In short, one of the greatest challenges that now confront the Second Republic is to prevent Christians from becoming as alienated from the political process as large segments of the Muslim community ended up feeling in the First Republic.

C1b. Lack of Leadership

Compounding the negative effects of Christian demoralization is the pronounced disorganization and leadership vacuum in their ranks. This phenomenon itself can be ascribed to four main causes.

One was the death between 1982 and 1992 of four "historic leaders" who in the past had provided Christians with strong leadership. The first to die was actually the youngest of them all, charismatic President-elect and founder of the Lebanese Forces Bashir Gemayel. Most Maronites, including former political foes, had placed great hopes in Bashir Gemayel, who was assassinated in 1982. Two years later, his father Pierre, founder and leader of the *Kata'ib* Party, passed away. In 1987, it was the turn of Camille Chamoun, former President and leader of the National Liberal Party. Most recently, in July, 1992, yet another former President expired: Suleyman Franjieh, leader of the most influential Maronite family in northern Lebanon.

The war forced into exile several Maronite leaders who had played an important political role in national politics. This for instance is the case of Raymond Eddé, who has been in Paris since 1977. More recently, Michel Aoun, too, has been forced to live in the French capital since the Syrian army evicted him from the Presidential Palace in Ba'abda in October, 1990.

The Maronite Church has proven either unwilling or unable to unify the community and provide it with the leadership it needs.

This is all the more unfortunate considering that in theory the Church is ideally placed to play that role, since it is still held in high regard by the Maronites and historically has helped the community overcome its divisions and promote its interests.

Finally, the new generation of Maronite politicians (Obeid, Lahoud, Bouwayz, Sa'adeh, etc.) lacks the legitimacy and experience of its predecessors.

C1c. Internal Fragmentation

The Maronites not only lack strong leadership, but what leadership they have is internally fragmented. It is true that divisions are nothing new to the Maronite community. Even prior to the war, there were sharp regional, ideological, and personal rivalries within the sect and among its leaders. Feuds among the Maronites' dominant political families were an integral part of the Lebanese landscape. For instance, there is a longstanding rivalry between the Gemayel family (influential in Beirut and Mount Lebanon) and the Franjieh family (based in Zgharta, in northern Lebanon).

The civil war, however, greatly exacerbated longstanding communal divisions. The violence inflicted by the Maronite militias was not only directed at the Muslim community, but also at each other. A process that contributed very significantly to this phenomenon was the ascendancy of Bashir Gemayel and his Lebanese Forces (LF). Bashir systematically eliminated all of his rivals within the Maronite community, before he himself became the victim of the cycle of violence that he so much had contributed to creating.

Thus, after three failed Phalangist attempts on his life, Raymond Eddé finally left Lebanon for Paris, in 1977. A year later, Tony Franjieh, his wife, infant daughter, and an estimated thirty of his bodyguards and followers were massacred during a particularly grisly raid engineered by the LF. In 1980, the LF crushed the Tigers, the militia of Camille Chamoun's National Liberal Party.

In this process, which spanned several years, thousands of Maronites lost their lives, usually in the most cruel manner, at the hands of the militiamen of the Phalange or LF. Needless to say, violence begets violence, and followers of the Franjieh, Chamoun, and other Christian warlords were responsible for a great deal of misery themselves. The bloodshed that Maronites inflicted on other Maronites will not be forgotten. The enmities thus created will not be overcome easily.

Intra-Maronite infighting and armed clashes did not end with the death of Bashir Gemayel, of course. In 1985, the LF confronted President Amin Gemayel for being too receptive to Syrian intentions in Lebanon. In 1986, Elie Hobeika was forcefully evicted from the leadership of the LF by Samir Ja'ja'. In 1988, the LF pressured President Amin Gemayel into leaving the

country, following his appointment of Michel Aoun as Prime Minister of an interim government (the LF were strongly opposed to Aoun's nomination). Most significantly, the early 1990 bloody confrontation between the LF and army units loyal to General Aoun illustrated dramatically the extent of the damage that the Maronite community inflicted on itself throughout the war. The Maronites' current lack of leadership, demoralization, disillusionment, and internal fragmentation are the results of this history. The community has been left politically exhausted by a war which it ended up waging against itself as much as against others.

Those Christian leaders who survived the bloodshed are today hopelessly fragmented along personal and ideological lines (e.g., Samir Ja'ja' versus George Sa'adeh, Samir Ja'ja' versus Aoun, Amin Gemayel versus Sa'adeh and Ja'ja', Ja'ja' versus Franjieh, Ja'ja' versus Dori Chamoun, etc.). They are also divided between those who refuse any compromise with Syria, and those who accept to work within the confines of the Syrian presence and influence in the country. In early 1993, the *Kata'ib* (Phalange) Party split into two rival factions, for the first time in its 57 years of existence. The very fact that the oldest and traditionally strongest political organization in the Maronite community divided against itself epitomizes the current state of disorientation within the Maronite community.

C1d. Dilemmas and Prospects

As mentioned earlier, there can be no rebuilding of the Lebanese polity until the Christian community is formally re-integrated into the political process. Unfortunately, the situation that has been described so far suggests that the Maronites, the key Christian sect, lack the institutional channels through which they could become once again an active player in Lebanese politics. The following conditions are thus required for Lebanon to move forward.

Maronites—under the leadership of the Patriarch, the *Kata'ib* party, and/or a few independent figures that may yet emerge—must first rebuild their community as a cohesive political force.

To become effective on the national political scene, a reinvigorated Maronite community must then reach out to moderate Muslim elites and find some accommodation with Syria. In other words, a new national pact must be concluded between Christians and Muslims, and a mutually acceptable understanding over the extent of Syrian influence must be worked out between Damascus and legitimate representatives of the Maronite community. Needless to say, this will be for the Maronites a very difficult and painful process which, considering the weakness of their bargaining position, will require yet further concessions on their part.

In the short term, the following steps would help begin reintegrate the Maronite community into the mainstream of Lebanese politics:

- Formation of a new cabinet (still headed by current Prime Minister Hariri) that includes several truly representative Maronite politicians.

- In the Presidential elections scheduled for 1995, election of a strong Maronite candidate who enjoys the backing of his community, and proceeds to use it to design for himself a national role greater than that for which the constitution provides.

- Anticipated parliamentary elections take place (before their scheduled date of 1996), in order to allow the Maronite community to formally participate in them. More representative Maronite MPs would then increase the legitimacy in Maronite eyes of not only Parliament, but state institutions in general. Having realized that the boycott of the 1992 parliamentary elections was a major political blunder, Maronites are reportedly eager to see new elections take place.

C2. The Maronite Community's Main Players

The main players in the Maronite community are President Elias Hrawi; the Maronite Church and its Patriarch, Nasrallah Boutros Sfayr; and the Phalange Party, led by George Sa'adeh. Other less influential actors include the Lebanese Forces (led by Samir Ja'ja'), Michel Aoun (from his exile in Paris), and a few regionally-influential individuals from traditionally well-established families, who were elected to Parliament in 1992 (Sulayman Tony Franjieh in Zgharta, northern Lebanon; Faris Buwayz and Elias and Rshayd al-Khazen in the Kisirwan district of Mount Lebanon).

C2a. President Elias Hrawi

Hrawi is widely seen as a weak President. This is due not only to the sharply diminished role and prerogatives of the Presidency in the Second Republic, but also to Hrawi's longstanding image as a weak politician, who never enjoyed a wide base of support, and never headed one of the Maronite community's main political organizations. To this day, he is perceived as a relatively unsophisticated individual, who has not proven capable of providing strong national leadership. His close relationship to Syria, which goes back to the 1970s (and which largely explains why he is now President) further limits his popular appeal, especially among Maronites.

Even in his own district of Zahle, Hrawi is not particularly popular. This was demonstrated vividly in the legislative elections of 1992, during which both his own son Roy and one of his closest advisers and then-minister Shawqi Fakhoury lost their

bids for parliamentary seats. (Roy Hrawi lost to his cousin Khalil Hrawi, from a rival branch of the family, and Mr. Fakhoury lost his bid for the Greek Orthodox seat to Mr. Nicholas Fattoush.)

In August, 1993, yet another indication of President Hrawi's marginal position was the appointment of Nasri Khoury to the Presidency of the Syrian-Lebanese Higher Council. It was well known in Lebanon that President Hrawi's favorite for the position was Shawqi Fakhoury. The nomination, accordingly, was widely perceived as a blow to Mr. Hrawi.

Although President Hrawi has been trying very hard to improve his image, particularly among Christians, his ability to do so is inherently limited by the constraints under which he operates. A lame duck President, his term ends in 1995, and according to the constitution, he cannot be re-elected. It is unlikely that he will remain an important player in national politics after he steps down.

C2b. The Maronite Church and Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfayr

Over the centuries, the Church has been instrumental in enabling the Maronites to maintain their sense of distinct identity. It has done so primarily by acting as the collective memory of the community preserving its traditions and transmitting them from one generation to another. The implicit or explicit worldviews underlying these traditions (in particular the Maronites' pro-Western orientation and fear of being overwhelmed by Muslims) have perpetuated the Maronites' relative isolation, which in turn has heightened the Church's symbolic role. The Church also has reinforced the cohesion of the community by acting as a mediator to mend intra-Maronite disputes, so as to enable the community to present a unified front to the outside world.

When its interests or that of the community have been at stake, the Church has not hesitated to become involved in politics. For instance, it played a leading role in instigating, organizing, and providing support for the uprisings of poor Maronite peasants against their Druze overlords in the 19th century. In 1932, when the French mandatory authorities in Lebanon suspended the constitution, the Maronite Church promptly intervened to oppose this move. During the 1958 civil war, Patriarch Méouchy was an active participant in the anti-Chamoun coalition. Less than a decade later, when the three main leaders of the Maronite community at the time—Pierre Gemayel, Camille Chamoun, and Raymond Eddé— concluded their so-called "Triple Alliance" against President Helou, they were backed by the Patriarch. Finally, in 1975-76, as soon as hostilities broke out, the monastic orders, led by Father Sharbal Qassis, became involved in the fighting.

Although these examples span more than a century and very different historical contexts, the nature of the Church's role in them has been remarkably constant: to provide moral justification for the actions of specific Maronite groups, put clerical resources at the disposal of particular contenders for power, and act as a mouthpiece for the community's interests (or, rather, the Church's view of them).

The war witnessed a weakening of the Church, whose political and social influence was somewhat displaced by the appearance of new actors less receptive to its influence—in particular the militias. The erosion of the Church's power was perhaps best demonstrated in 1989-90, when repeated appeals by Patriarch Sfayr failed to stop the fighting between Aoun and the Lebanese Forces.

Nevertheless, the Church remains a symbol of Maronite identity, and it benefits from an aura that no other Maronite actor can claim. As a result, it retains a significant political and social role. The last few years have provided several examples of this phenomenon.

- In 1989-90, even though his pleas for a ceasefire agreement between the Lebanese Forces and Michel Aoun fell on deaf ears, the Patriarch actively sought to use his moral authority to put an end to intra-Maronite divisions. (Father Bulus Ni'man, former head of the Maronite monastic orders, was also involved in the political negotiations.) Subsequently, the Church put its prestige behind efforts to mobilize Maronite support for the Ta'if Agreement.

- Two years later, in the summer of 1992, when the Maronite community was trying to develop a unified stance toward the issue of whether or not it should participate in the parliamentary elections, the Church once again played a leadership role. By late July, those who supported participation could still hope to have the upper hand. It was only when the Patriarch publicly announced that he favored a postponement of the elections that the balance of power within the community irremediably tipped toward advocates of the boycott (even though the Patriarch insisted that his position bound no one). It was at that point in particular that the leadership of the *Kata'ib*—already under pressure from the party's rank-and-file—reluctantly resigned itself not to participate in the electoral contest.

- Significantly, a unified Maronite position on the elections was forged through a series of meetings which took place in early August at the seat of the Patriarchate, in Bkirki. The discussions, which lasted several days, brought together representatives of every single Maronite organization, in addition to eight Maronite ministers, some thirty Maronite MPs, and other

prominent Maronite personalities. Initially, a compromise was sought between proponents and opponents of participation. After the position of the Patriarch became known, however, the meetings turned into an opportunity to present to the outside world the "unified Maronite position" over the elections.

- In January, 1993, the Church's role as a broker within the Maronite community was demonstrated once again. When it became clear that the *Kata'ib* Party was about to split in two contending factions, Patriarch Sfayr met separately with each of them, and urged them to compromise.

- The last two years also have provided numerous illustrations of the Church's status as a bridge between the Maronites and other communities. In 1992, Syria publicly invited some of its Muslim clients in Lebanon to reach out to Patriarch Sfayr, in an attempt to lessen the Maronites' political marginalization. As a result, a series of Muslim delegations (by Junblatt, Hizballah, and Prime Minister Hariri himself) paid official visits to the Patriarch in Bkirki. More recently, in the wake of the July, 1993 Israeli attack on south Lebanon, representatives of Lebanon's various sects met in Bkirki, under the aegis of the Patriarch. The communique that they issued following their discussions denounced the Israeli bombardment and called for the unconditional implementation of U.N. Resolution 425. The meeting was widely interpreted as a critical step toward the formation of a cross-confessional position on the matter of Lebanon's relations with Israel. Similarly, a meeting between Druze leader Walid Junblatt and Patriarch Sfayr in Bkirki on September 4, 1993, was heralded as a first and important step toward reconciliation between the Druze and Maronite communities.

The above notwithstanding, Patriarch Sfayr so far has failed to play in post-civil war Lebanon a role commensurate with the historical importance of the Church. For all matters and purposes, his current status is that of a relatively weak opposition figure. In the wake of the tightening of relations between Beirut and Damascus during the second half of 1993 (activation of the Syrian-Lebanese Higher Council and signature of several cooperation agreements between the two countries), the Patriarch has stepped up his criticism of Syrian power in Lebanon. He also has repeatedly hinted that he is unlikely to travel to Damascus any time soon, despite longstanding efforts to organize such a visit.

If anything, therefore, Patriarch Sfayr's attitude toward Syria has hardened during the last few months. This is unlikely to help him play the more influential political role to which he undoubtedly aspires.

C2c. The Phalange Party, George Sa'adeh, and Karim Pakradouni

When the civil war first broke out, in 1975-76, the Phalange (*Kata'ib*) was the dominant political party among Maronites. It was founded in 1936 as a Christian youth movement by Pierre Gemayel, who modelled it after the paramilitary youth organizations found in Germany and Italy at the time. After the 1958 civil war, the party experienced very substantial growth, and became the largest and best organized political force within the Maronite community. Although the *Kata'ib* tried to project itself as a non-confessional organization, it never was able to extend its appeal far beyond the confines of the Maronite community.

The party was weakened during the war by the ascendancy of the Lebanese Forces (LF). Although the LF initially emerged as the Phalange Party's militia, they subsequently grew to absorb other militias, and rapidly displaced the *Kata'ib* itself. In areas under the military control of the LF, the *Kata'ib* soon become subservient to the militia it initially had created.

The end of hostilities in 1990 forced both the LF and the *Kata'ib* to redefine themselves and seek a new role in post-civil war Lebanon. The LF was disarmed and reconverted itself as a political party in 1991. Members of the Phalangist party who, during the war, had become militiamen of the LF were then forced to choose between membership in the Phalange, or membership in the new LF party. The leadership of the Phalange Party refused to give them the choice of belonging to both organizations. "Dual loyalties" would not be tolerated. Unfortunately for the *Kata'ib*, it itself became split between supporters of Phalange Party leader, George Sa'adeh, and followers of LF leader, Samir Ja'ja'.

Thus, the *Kata'ib* emerged out of the war substantially weakened. Competition from the LF had reduced its appeal and cohesion. The party itself had become an uneasy coalition of factions. One consisted of LF supporters, who wanted the LF to simply take over the Phalange. Another was made up of followers of George Sa'adeh, who controlled the *Kata'ib*'s Politburo, the highest decision-making body in the party. Yet another group owed allegiance to the Gemayel family.

The two most influential individuals within the *Kata'ib* today are its President, George Sa'adeh, and its Secretary General, Karim Pakradouni. George Sa'adeh is now in his mid-sixties (he was born in 1928). He was first elected President of the *Kata'ib* in 1986, and re-elected in June 1992, when he successfully fought off a challenge to his leadership by supporters of Samir Ja'ja'. During these elections, Sa'adeh won a second term as Party President by defeating Samir Ja'ja' by 60 votes to 56 in a second round of voting. (The Party President is elected by the politburo and by the heads of the regional offices and their deputies.) George Sa'adeh was a minister in Rashid al-Sulh's cabinet, but resigned in protest against the

government's refusal to postpone the parliamentary elections. In July, 1993, his control over the *Kata'ib* 's apparatus was increased when his followers emerged as clear winners in elections for the heads of the party's regional and district branches.

Karim Pakradouni, who is now 49, is a former adviser to several Maronite leaders, including former Presidents Elias Sarkis and Amin Gemayel. In the 1980s, he also was a close adviser to one of his current political foes, Samir Ja'ja'. He was elected Secretary General of the *Kata'ib* in July 1992.

For the last two years, George Sa'adeh and Karim Pakradouni have endeavored to revive the now moribund *Kata'ib* Party by redefining its ideology and agenda. They hope that, by doing so, the party may serve as a channel for the reintegration of the Maronite community into the Lebanese political mainstream.

Both Sa'adeh and Pakradouni know that the era of Maronite hegemony over Lebanon is over, and they understand that the future of their party and of the Maronite community will be highly dependent upon their ability to coexist peacefully with Muslim forces within the framework defined by the Ta'if Agreement, the current balance of power between sects, and the Syrian presence in the country.

As a result, they are trying to portray themselves as open, tolerant leaders, open to compromise and national reconciliation. They also are stressing what Pakradouni calls "le Maronitisme coexistentiel"—a Maronitism of confessional coexistence, one that emphasizes cross-sectarian understanding and dialogue.

Concretely, this approach consists of pushing the party toward establishing new bridges to the Muslim community, adopting more tolerant views on Lebanon's "Arab identity," and paying greater attention to socioeconomic issues, while de-emphasizing the very themes that traditionally have been central to Maronitism but have left the community relatively isolated (in particular the need to preserve cultural identity and distinctiveness, and the fear of being taken over by Muslims). Thus, Sa'adeh and Pakradouni are seeking to change the *Kata'ib*'s image from that of an essentially parochial Maronite grouping catering to the narrow interests of one community, to that of a party that may still have a predominantly Maronite following, but is open to the other sects and capable of operating as the primary vehicle for a Christian-Muslim dialogue.

One can thus understand why the leadership of the *Kata'ib* party was leaning initially toward participation in the 1992 elections. Sa'adeh had argued that it would be a mistake not to take part in the elections, because they probably would take place anyway, and thus leave the Maronite community without influence in the new system. In short, he saw participation in a flawed system that discriminates against Maronites and would leave them under- represented as preferable to the alternative,

which would completely marginalize that community. In fact, Sa'adeh and a few other *Kata'ib* candidates had initially entered the race in the northern governorate. They withdrew their candidacies in mid-August only under intense pressure from the party's rank-and-file, the Patriarch, and other Maronite organizations (especially the Lebanese Forces).

In the wake of the elections, tensions grew within the party between supporters of Sa'adeh, who control the party leadership in Beirut, and followers of Samir Ja'ja', who are more influential among rank-and-file members at the local and regional level. Ja'ja' supporters became increasingly resentful of Sa'adeh's efforts to tighten his control over the party base. In January 1993, these tensions eventually culminated in a party split, in which the pro-Ja'ja' faction defected.

As a result, what remains of the *Kata'ib* Party is in a much weaker position to serve as the core around which the political rebuilding of the Maronite community might take place. Sa'adeh's task is also complicated by the fact that many see him as a fairly weak individual. In spite of that, the *Kata'ib* Party retains important assets that give it a chance to regain the large membership and base of popular support that it once enjoyed in the Maronite community:

- As the oldest political party in the Maronite community, it still benefits from a certain aura.
- It can redefine itself more easily than a former militia such as the Lebanese Forces.
- Unlike the Lebanese Forces, it is not handicapped by the anger directed at the militias for the terror that they inflicted on civilian populations during the war.
- Its President, unlike Ja'ja', is not tainted by a direct participation in massacres. He is thus far more acceptable to the public as a politician or potential cabinet member, and can envision a new political role for himself.
- Since 1991, the *Kata'ib* leadership has displayed a realist, moderate, and pragmatic approach to the problems of the Maronite community. It seeks to reach out to moderate Muslims leaders. It also understands the need to mend fences with Syria, and has maintained discreet but active contacts with Damascus. In May 1993, a high level *Kata'ib* delegation headed by Sa'adeh visited Damascus for talks with Syrian Vice President Abd al-Halim Khaddam. For its part, Damascus is far more favorably disposed toward the *Kata'ib* than it is toward the Lebanese Forces or many other Christian leaders and groups.

- The fact that the boycott—which Sa'adeh and Pakradouni initially opposed—turned out to have been a tragic political mistake for the Maronite community gives added credibility to the party leadership.

The 19th Congress of the Phalange held in November, 1993 provided Sa'adeh and Pakradouni with yet another opportunity to seek to redefine the party's role in Lebanese politics. In a speech delivered to the Congress, Pakradouni engaged in the now-traditional critique of the party's past orientations, including its presumed failure to come to terms with Lebanon's Arab identity, its opposition to socioeconomic reforms, and its inability to reach out to Muslim constituencies. These and other declarations, as well as the October, 1993 meeting between Sa'adeh and pro-Syrian Christian leader Sulayman Tony Franjieh (see below), are clear indications of the *Kata'ib*'s desire to reach an understanding with Damascus and moderate Muslim leaders. This trend could possibly lead to the inclusion of Sa'adeh into a reshuffled cabinet, although such an event would create serious tensions within the Phalange party itself.

C2d. The Lebanese Forces and Samir Ja'ja'

The Lebanese Forces (LF) was established in 1976 by Bashir Gemayel, the youngest son of the *Kata'ib*'s founder and leader, Pierre Gemayel. As mentioned earlier, the LF was initially designed as the military branch of the *Kata'ib*, but it soon absorbed other Christian militias and became increasingly autonomous from the *Kata'ib* Party, which it eventually dominated. In the areas under its control, the LF evolved into a de-facto government, which substituted its authority for that of the state, and began to collect taxes and provide services. By the early 1980s, it had become the single most effective politico-military force in the Christian community, serving as Bashir Gemayel's power base for his election to the Presidency in August 1982.

The LF has been under the leadership of Samir Ja'ja' since 1986. Ja'ja' was very slow to accept the Ta'if Agreement, which he did not endorse until April 1990 (six months after the agreement was signed)—and then only as a way of neutralizing General Aoun within the Maronite community. Aoun's decrying of militia power in the country had been directed in part at the LF and had struck a chord with a very large segment of the Christian community. Thus the General had emerged as a major threat to the LF's political future, and his defeat by the Syrians (with whom the LF cooperated in that instance) rid the LF from a powerful enemy. In accordance with the provisions of the Ta'if Agreement, the LF was disarmed in 1991, and was officially licensed as a political party.

As it endeavors to redefine its role to fit Lebanon's new political order, the LF and its leader benefit from the LF's tight organization and the considerable wealth it amassed over the years. However, they also operate under such constraints that

it is hard to imagine that they could play a major role in Lebanon's future.

- Lebanese have not forgotten the excesses of the militias throughout the civil war, and they are unlikely to forgive individuals such as Ja'ja' for the suffering they imposed on the country. For years, LF militiamen, like their counterparts in other militias, abused and exploited the populations of the areas they controlled. The cruelty and self-serving behavior that militia leaders displayed during the war has become a considerable handicap as they now seek to project themselves as traditional politicians. This is perhaps particularly true of Ja'ja', who has considerable blood—including Christian one—on his hands. Among the massacres in which he is believed to have participated, Ja'ja' is considered responsible for the assassination of Maronite leader Tony Franjieh (son of former President Suleiman Franjieh, and father of current Marada leader Sulayman Tony Franjieh). The attack, as mentioned earlier, was particularly vicious. It left Tony, his wife, infant daughter, and some 30 personal bodyguards dead.

- Christians and Muslims alike also remember vividly the devastation caused in 1989-90 in East Beirut by the military confrontations between Aoun and the LF. This fighting was the most intense of the civil war. It left hundreds dead and many thousands wounded, and forced an estimated 250,000 Christians in East Beirut to leave for other parts of Lebanon or abroad. It also led to massive damage to homes, vehicles, businesses, factories, and the electricity and telephone networks. Many still hold Ja'ja' responsible for this misery.

- The LF is also handicapped by its former association with Israel, which goes back to 1977-78. At the time, Bashir Gemayel had arranged for the Israelis to provide his militia with training and equipment. LF contacts with Israel, whose 1982 invasion greatly contributed to the election of Bashir Gemayel as President, continued throughout the civil war. Between 1988 and 1990, the LF had strong Israeli backing—first when it joined Aoun's "war of liberation" against Syrian forces, from March to September 1989, and subsequently when it fought Aoun in 1990. In 1990, in fact, weapons and military intelligence and advice provided by Israel were essential to the LF's ability to conduct the fight against Aoun, at a time when both contenders had ceased to receive weapons from Iraq (which was deeply upset that the LF and Aoun had turned against each other instead of facing Syrian forces). According to some reports, Israeli threats to intervene militarily on behalf of the LF were instrumental in convincing Aoun not to continue the fight against the LF.

- Although the LF still controls considerable assets, its financial base has been shrinking over the past few years. This will continue to be the case, now that many of the institutions which used to provide the LF with its resources have been freed from the militia's grip. Businesses no longer have to pay militias for "protection." Ports, which used to provide militias with ways to collect import duties, have been returned to state control. Public buildings which had been taken over by the LF during the war (including a building that used to house the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation, the LF's radio and T.V. station), have now been repossessed by the state. In other words, the LF's infrastructure is progressively being dismantled.

- Most importantly perhaps, the LF suffers from the fact that Damascus is very ill-disposed toward it and its leader. Hafiz al-Asad can hardly forget the LF's past willingness to enlist Israeli help to counter Syrian policy in Lebanon. Indeed, the LF's most constant theme throughout the civil war was its staunch opposition to Syrian influence. After all, in 1985, Samir Ja'ja' had led a revolt against the Phalange Party and the leadership of President Amin Gemayel precisely on the grounds that they were too willing to compromise with Syria. Although Ja'ja' eventually endorsed Ta'if and cooperated with the Syrians in unseating Michel Aoun, he did so very reluctantly and solely because it had become the only way to stop Michel Aoun's growing influence from destroying the LF's power base. To this day, Damascus regards Ja'ja' with distrust.

In short, the LF—the entire *raison d'etre* of which was the civil war—is ill-adapted to the Second Republic's new environment. It is too closely associated with the violence of the civil war, for which it is partially held responsible. It is not surprising that it plays an increasingly marginal role in Lebanese politics. Ja'ja' must be aware that the LF cannot enable him to realize his ambitions in the new, post-civil war context. This is probably why he challenged Sa'adeh's leadership of the *Kata'ib*, and sought to take over the Phalange as a ready-made structure more suited to the conditions now prevailing in Lebanon.

C2e. Other Players in the Maronite Community

Among other players in the Maronite community, Michel Aoun figures prominently. In late 1988 and 1989, the general emerged as the dominant figure in Lebanon. His denunciation of "the reign of the militias" and of Syrian and Israeli power in the country struck a chord with the Lebanese public, especially among Christians. Large segments of the Maronite community came to regard Aoun as Lebanon's savior, and as the last politician capable of restoring Maronite hegemony over the country.

Although he still enjoys substantial support at the popular level, the General alienated many of his former supporters after he repeatedly displayed an inability to compromise with political foes and a strong tendency to play only for himself. The 1989-90 period offered far too many proofs of Aoun's stubborn and intransigent character, which hardly seems suited to the give-and-take of politics in a multi-confessional and highly fragmented country that seeks to put itself back together after a long and bloody civil war.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is easier to be critical of Aoun's tendency to become engaged in quixotic battles that cannot be won—such as "the war of liberation" he proclaimed against Syria in March 1989, and which he lost in only six months. More importantly perhaps, many Christians still resent Aoun's readiness to inflict massive damage on the population of East Beirut in 1990, merely for the sake of unifying the Christian enclave under his control. In early 1990, large segments of the Christian community also felt betrayed by the General's complete about-face and rapprochement with Syria (which Aoun sought as an ally against the Lebanese Forces). Still in 1990, Aoun also earned the enmity of the Church and its leader by ignoring the Patriarch's repeated pleas for a compromise with Samir Ja'ja'.

Needless to add, Muslim leaders, too, are very much opposed to Aoun. They still resent his acceptance of the Premiership in September, 1988, in complete violation of the spirit of the National Pact. They are even more bitter about the way he then proceeded to attempt to restore Maronite hegemony over the country, inflicting huge damage on West Beirut's and Lebanon's entire economy (because of East Beirut's role in the national economy, the economic consequences of the fighting there were felt far beyond the capital). In a context in which a Maronite leader's political prospects depend more than ever on his ability to establish bridges to Sunni, Shiite, and Druze politicians, Muslim anger toward Aoun constitutes yet another cloud on the General already bleak political future.

All of these factors suggest that Aoun would find it very difficult to stage a political come-back, even in the absence of Syrian troops in Lebanon. In any event, for the time being at least, he effectively has been neutralized. His presence in France is regulated by a secret agreement between the French and Lebanese governments which probably precludes his return to Lebanon.

Also living in Paris today are former President Amin Gemayel and Raymond Eddé. Gemayel is widely seen as yesterday's man. He has been living in Paris ever since September, 1988, when his Presidential term expired (as mentioned earlier, he was forced into exile by the Lebanese Forces leadership, which was deeply upset by his appointment of Michel Aoun as Prime Minister of an interim government). He unexpectedly and briefly returned to Lebanon in late July, 1992 to lend his public support to a

Maronite boycott of the elections. At the time, he also made several statements critical of George Sa'adeh and the new leadership of the Phalange Party. Sa'adeh, in turn, accused Gemayel of reopening old wounds and disputes.

Raymond Eddé is the son of Emile Eddé (a President under the French mandate). Since 1949, he had led the predominantly Maronite party known as the "National Bloc." Although Raymond Eddé enjoys widespread respect as a man of principle, the civil war— during which he refused to create a militia and join in the orgy of violence—marginalized him. He is cut off from Lebanese realities (he has been living in Paris ever since 1977), and keeps rehashing the same themes. He also has been one of Syria's main critics over the years (he even opposed Syrian intervention on behalf of the Christians in 1976)—which is not a political asset in the current situation. Unlike Gemayel, who has endorsed Ta'if (but criticized its uneven implementation), Eddé is still opposed to the agreement, largely on the grounds that it institutionalizes Syrian power in Lebanon. He also refuses to recognize the legitimacy of the parliament elected in 1992, although he has made conciliatory statements about Hariri.

Also critical of the Ta'if Agreement are Dori Chamoun and his National Liberal Party (NLP). Established by former President Camille Chamoun in 1958, the NLP was seriously weakened by the civil war, during which it was eclipsed by the rise of the Lebanese Forces, along with other Christian political groups (The Tigers, the NLP's militia, was thoroughly defeated by the LF in July, 1980). The NLP has been further marginalized since the end of hostilities, largely because it traditionally has been one of the most anti-Syrian forces in the country (Damascus is widely believed to be responsible for the assassination in Beirut in October, 1990 of Dori Chamoun's father, Dany).

More influential is Sulayman Tony Franjieh, son of assassinated Marada militia leader Tony Franjieh and grandson of former President Sulayman Franjieh. The Franjiehs, from their seat in Zgharta, remain the dominant Christian family in northern Lebanon. In the post-Ta'if era, they have been able to capitalize on a longstanding relationship with Syria and the family of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad.

Sulayman Tony Franjieh ran in the parliamentary elections of 1992, and was elected for one of the Maronite seats in Zgharta on the Omar Karame list, with an honorable 75,098 votes (behind the widow of assassinated President René Mu'awwad, Nayla Mu'awwad, who, with 90,599 received the most votes by any Maronite candidate). In October, 1992, Sulayman Tony Franjieh was appointed Minister of Housing in the Hariri government.

Less influential than Sulayman Tony Franjieh are a few Maronite leaders with regional power bases, who, unlike most Maronite politicians, decided to run in the parliamentary elections of 1992. The most influential individuals in this group include: Mikhail Daher, a longstanding ally of Syria, elected in

the 'Akkar with 63,071 votes on the Umar Karame list; Estephan Duwayhi, elected in Zgharta on the Karame list as well; Qahalan Issa al-Khouri, elected in Beharri on the Karame list; Faris Buwayz, Minister for Foreign Affairs and son in law of President Hrawi, who was elected in Kisirwan; Michel al-Khuri, a former President of the Central Bank who, despite his low score of 130 in the Jubayl district, enjoys widespread respect within and outside of the Maronite community, and is a potential successor to President Hrawi in 1995; and Alias and Rshayd al-Khazen, both of whom were also elected as independent in Kisirwan.

D. The Druze Community

Although they comprise only about 7 percent of Lebanon's population today, the Druze continue to play a political role that is disproportionate to their numerical importance. This is largely due to their unusual degree of solidarity. In a way reminiscent of the Maronites before the civil war, the Druze have been preoccupied with preserving the distinctiveness of their sect, and they have been able to maintain a surprisingly high level of communal independence and autonomy.

Ironically, the assassination in 1977 of the charismatic Druze leader Kamal Junblatt indirectly led to greater cohesion and self-reliance among the Druze. Kamal Junblatt had emerged as the dominant figure in one of the two key protagonists in the civil war, the Lebanese National Movement, a coalition of predominantly Muslim and self-declared "leftist" organizations and militias. Thus, the appeal of Kamal Junblatt extended far beyond the narrow confines of his sect. He had become the main spokesman for all the anti-status quo forces in the country, as they were challenging the Maronite establishment.

Following his assassination, Kamal was succeeded by his son Walid. Walid—who lacks his father's charisma and imposing presence—soon showed himself unable or unwilling to maintain the broad based support that his father had established. On the other hand, he displayed even greater concern with intra-Druze affairs and the sect's power in the Lebanese political system. As a result, under the leadership of Walid Junblatt, the community's cohesion has been strengthened.

Furthermore, unlike the Maronites, the Druze did not suffer from devastating infighting during the war. In fact, the conflict increased political unity in their ranks, to the extent that it weakened one of the two clans—the Yazbakis, led by the Arslan family—in which the community traditionally had been divided, and left the Junblatt family in a clearly dominant position within the sect.

In addition to his status as Druze leader, Walid Junblatt also heads the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), created by his father in 1949. The PSP operated as the Druze militia throughout the war. It played a particularly important role in 1983-84, in the wake of the Israeli invasion, when it successfully defended

the Druze heartland, the Shuf district in Mount Lebanon, against attacks by the Lebanese Forces. Despite its progressive and secular rhetoric, the PSP is little more than the main instrument through which the Junblatt family mobilizes and organizes its clientele, as it seeks to promote its own and its sect's interests in Lebanon.

The PSP provides Walid Junblatt with an effective tool to defend the political interests of a particularly cohesive community that is well aware of the need to display group solidarity to compensate for its relatively small size. However, Junblatt's freedom of maneuver is very limited by Syrian power in Lebanon. This was shown for instance after the 1992 elections, when the Druze leader was unable to prevent the nomination of Mohsen Dalloul, a Shiite, as Minister of Defense in the Hariri government—even though, in the past, that ministry had usually gone to a Druze (with a few exceptions, such as when Usayran was Minister of Defense).

The Arslan family today has been largely marginalized by the Junblattis, and other influential Druze families (e.g., the Hamade or the Takieddine) are most often Junblatti allies. Nevertheless, Walid Junblatt's longstanding ambition to monopolize intra-Druze politics has been challenged recently by Talal Arslan (son of former Yazbaki leader Majid Arslan) and Faysal Arslan (Talal's half-brother and a political rival for leadership of the clan). Both for instance have requested that, should Patriarch Sfayr visit Junblatt in the Shuf, he should also meet with them.

E. A New Elite?

Having reviewed the main political groupings and leaders found in each of the country's major sects, one can now formulate some tentative generalizations about the current Lebanese political elite.

E1. Two Elite Characteristics

Two characteristics of Lebanon's current elite are its inclusion of many individuals who are newcomers to elite status, and the gap that separates the elite from the mass public.

E1a. New Faces

Most of the politicians who dominated Lebanese politics for more than three decades, from independence to the outbreak of the civil war, have passed from the scene. Many were assassinated or simply died: Kamal Junblatt among the Druze, Rashid Karame among the Sunnis, Pierre Gemayel, Camille Chamoun, and Suleiman Franjieh among the Maronites. Others were forced into exile: Sa'ib Salam among the Sunnis and Raymond Eddé among the Maronites. Still others were displaced by the leaders of militias and radical religious groups that appeared during the war, and they since have been marginalized (which is the case of many

former Shiite and Sunni patrons). In their place, one often finds new figures, who emerged during the civil war or in its aftermath.

Although the clear tendency toward the emergence of a new elite has barely touched the Druze community thus far, it is not clear that Walid Junblatt will be able to maintain his hegemonic position within the sect. Similarly, although elite renewal has affected the Shiites and the Maronites far more than the Sunnis (among whom several influential leaders still come from leading families , e.g., Umar Karame, Tammam Salam, Salim al-Hoss and Rashid al-Solh), well-established Sunni families now have to share communal power with new figures as well.

Overall, therefore, Lebanon's current political elite includes a clear majority of newcomers: Amal's and Hizballah's leaders among the Shiites; Rafiq Hariri and the handful of Sunni fundamentalist leaders among the Sunnis; and virtually the entire spectrum of Maronite politicians currently active in state institutions (from President Hrawi down to most of the Maronite MPs, few had more than very marginal political status when the war broke out, and most owe their current position to Damascus's relentless attempt to promote a new, pro-Syrian leadership among the Maronites).

Out of 128 MPs elected in 1992, only 18 already sat in the Parliament elected in 1972 (due to the war, there were no parliamentary elections between 1972 and 1992). Furthermore, contrary to a longstanding feature of Lebanese politics, many of the parliamentarians elected in 1992 do not belong to the well-established political families that traditionally have dominated the country's Chamber of Deputies.

It is also noteworthy that, contrary to the personalism and patronage that has long characterized Lebanese politics, many of the Second Republic's most active politicians operate according to different rules.

- First, for the first time in the country's history, candidates from explicitly religious movements and parties were elected to Lebanon's parliament in 1992. This phenomenon suggests two new, although still incipient, trends: one toward ideological voting, and another away from secular candidates and toward religious groups.

- Second, achievement—as opposed to inherited status—has been an important factor in the rising political fortunes of several new members of the elite. The best example here is of course Rafiq al-Hariri, who was selected largely on the basis of his reputation as a doer and problem-solver. It is also true of many of the technocrats with whom Hariri has surrounded himself. Similarly, several of the MPs who were elected on Salim al-Hoss's list in 1992 ran on the basis of their

expertise and/or involvement in intellectual clubs or local voluntary associations. Even to the extent that such politicians rely on patronage, their ability to deliver services is usually due less to inherited wealth and connections than to financial success in the professions and/or many years of work at the grass-roots level.

E1b. Elite-Mass Gap

Although this author knows of no study that analyzes the social background of Lebanon's new politicians, it seems clear that a substantial number of them share a lower-middle and middle class background. Many of the leaders of Amal, Hizballah, Sunni fundamentalist groups, and former militias are of lower-middle and middle class origins. This contrasts sharply with the pre-civil war situation, when the elite was largely dominated by upper-middle and upper class families. Thus, in class terms, the elite is now closer to its base than twenty years ago.

Ironically, however, the new elite seems more cut off from the population than its pre-1975 predecessor. No pre-war politician, for one, could be accused of the kinds of atrocities that were committed by many members of the current elite (e.g., Elie Hobeika or Samir Ja'ja'), often against their own co-religionists. Neither did Lebanon's pre-1975 establishment abuse its constituencies as much as the warlords and militia leaders did during the war. Far too many members of the old elite may have been selfish and insensitive to their constituencies's needs, but few ever imposed on the population the kind of violence and exactions that the militia leaders did.

Moreover, Lebanon's current political elite lacks domestic credibility and popular legitimacy. Few of its members can boast any kind of support beyond their own sect and region. Indeed, the country desperately needs true national political figures. Even more serious is the fact that few politicians in the Maronite and Sunni communities are seen as truly representative of their own communities' aspirations. Maronite politicians currently active in the institutional game have been hand-picked by Syria. The same is largely true of the Sunni community, which suffers from a leadership vacuum. In other words, the gap between the elite and the masses—which was already wide before the war broke out—has been further enlarged by the civil war and by post-Ta'if external manipulations and internal complicities. The public is very much alienated from a new establishment which, it feels, does not represent popular aspirations. As a result, the entire political process suffers from a shortage of legitimacy.

E2. One or Several Elites?

Lebanon's current political elite is also far more diverse than its pre-civil war counterpart. Indeed, it is probably far less homogeneous than at any time in the country's previous history. Of course, the divisions according to sectarian

affiliation remain. Even more significant, however, are the cleavages created by differences in social and professional background, outlook, and the time in which membership into the elite was gained (e.g., prior to the war, during the war, or after Ta'if). Along these lines, one may divide the current elite into five main categories.

E2a. The Old Guard

Representatives of the old, pre-war elite are still around, but they are far less numerous and powerful than they used to be. Because of the drastic changes that have affected Lebanon's power structure, their ability to rely on patronage and family connections to develop a personal following has been greatly curtailed. Yet, individuals who played a leading role before the civil war (Rashid al-Solh) or who are related and belong to the same generation as such individuals (e.g., Umar Karame) still exert substantial influence. As mentioned earlier, Umar Karame, in particular, is not only influential in northern Lebanon, but he controls one of the largest blocs in the 1992 parliament (at least nine MPs).

E2b. The Sons and Grandsons of the Pre-War Elite

The current Lebanese political scene also features the younger scions of the well-established families that have traditionally dominated Lebanese politics. Like the old guard, such politicians provide an important element of continuity between the First and Second Republics. At the same time, because of their relatively young age, they bring new energy into the Lebanese political system. Most prominent among them are Sulayman Tony Franjieh,who controls a bloc of approximately six members in the parliament, and Walid Junblatt (who can also be included in the category below), who was selected as Minister of State for the Displaced in the Hariri Government, and who can rely on the votes of at least 10 MPs.

E2c. Former Militia Leaders

The war provided many aspiring politicians with opportunities to enter politics through the militia system. This was the case of individuals as different as Samir Ja'ja', Elie Hubeiqah, and Nabih Berri. Such former militia leaders now form a third group within the current elite. Since 1990, they have sought to assume a new role—that of politician. One of the unwritten understandings that were reached in Ta'if was that the warlords would accept that their militias be disarmed in exchange for a place in Lebanon's political elite. Thus, following Aoun's defeat in October, 1990, the most influential militia leaders were formally included in the government.

The degree of success that militia leaders have met in managing the transformation from warlord to politician has varied according to three variables: the power-base with which they started, Syria's attitude toward them, and their personal skills

at manipulating the context of the Second Republic to their political advantage. Predictably, someone such as Nabih Berri—with the support of Syria and a large and well organized constituency such as Amal's—has done well for himself, becoming the first former militia leader ever to receive one of the country's three highest offices, Speaker of Parliament. By contrast, as shown earlier, Samir Ja'ja' has been operating under several handicaps: Damascus does not trust him; too many Lebanese despise him, even within his own community; and the Lebanese Forces, his main constituency, has been relatively unsuccessful at handling the transition from militia to political party.

The case of Ja'ja' is certainly not unique. With the exception of the Shiite community, the former militia leaders' attempt to project an image of respectability suffers from the widespread resentment still directed toward them.

E2d. Technocrats and Activist Professionals

Technocrats such as "Hariri's men" and professionals active at the local level through a variety of grass-roots voluntary associations--such as those elected on Salim al-Hoss's list in Beirut in the 1992 parliamentary elections (Joseph Mghayzil, Issam Na'man, Ousama Fakhoury)—constitute another important sub-group in Lebanon's current political elite. It also would seem that they represent a noticeably larger proportion of Lebanon's current political elite than was the case in the past.

The overwhelming success of Salim al-Hoss's list in Beirut underlines the electorate's alienation from traditional patrons, former militia leaders, and the politicians co-opted by Syria, and its increasing disgust with the corruption and nepotism that pervades Lebanese political life. It also shows the population's desire to see new figures emerge who are more sensitive to its needs, and put the problems of the country above petty feuds and parochial interests. What gave al-Hoss's list its widespread popular appeal was precisely its inclusion of many such figures. The new prominence of a significant number of technocrats and professionals in the elite may portend even greater and long overdue changes in the future.

E2e. Clerics and Lay Religious Activists

An entirely new segment of the political elite is made up of clerics and lay religious activists who belong to, or are loosely affiliated with, Hizballah or one of the Sunni fundamentalist groups. Indeed, for the first time in the country's history, a dozen or so of them even gained seats in the parliament elected in 1992.

As the old political bosses of the pre-war period, they too derive much of their appeal from the patronage they dispense in the form of welfare and relief services. But whereas prior to 1975 patronage was distributed on a personal basis—from patron to

client—and was meant to generate an exclusively person-to-person loyalty, the patronage offered by religious organizations is frequently distributed by the association as such, and it is meant to generate political loyalty less to a particular leader than to the group and its radical program or ideology. Thus, whereas the loyalty of the client to his patron in the pre-civil war period was generally devoid of ideological content, that is not the case with the new religious candidates.

In this context, the expansion of Hizballah's influence among the Shiites amounts to the replacement of one form of patronage—that dispensed by traditionally prominent families capitalizing on wealth and connections inherited from their forebears—by another form of patronage, that distributed by a recently established organization which owes much of its popularity to its ability to provide long neglected populations with a whole range of social welfare and relief services.

While patronage has contributed to the ascent of religious organizations, the latter also owe their appeal to the politico-religious ideas that they propagate. This is particularly true of Hizballah. Thus, as noted earlier, the election of radical or fundamentalist Islamic candidates to the 1992 Parliament also indicates a change in the way many Lebanese vote: away from the personalism that had characterized past parliamentary elections, and toward a more ideological and program-based way of selecting those running for office.

SECTION IV
COALITIONS AND ALIGNMENTS

The primary divisions in Lebanese politics today are over three issues:

- Support of, or opposition to, the current post-Ta'if order
- Attitude toward peace negotiations with Israel
- Acceptance or refusal to work within a Syrian-dominated system

The only significant opposition to the post-Ta'if order is found among Christian leaders, most of whom are excluded from the formal political process, including Parliament. Even among Christians, one ought to distinguish between those who oppose the compromises that were made at Ta'if (e.g., Aoun), and those who accept them but oppose the uneven way in which the agreement has been implemented (e.g. the Patriarch, Sa'adeh, or Gemayel).

As far as the issue of peace with Israel is concerned, the basic division is between the dominant secular-oriented forces on the one hand, and Hizballah and the Sunni fundamentalist groups on the other hand -- with Amal somewhere in between. Secular-oriented elements, including the current government and most MPs, support peace negotiations with Israel. By contrast, Hizballah and Sunni fundamentalist groups are opposed to them -- Hizballah even using the opposition to Israel's very existence as its main rallying theme. In between the two groups lies Amal, which is opposed to peace negotiations, but nevertheless refrains from embarrassing the government over that issue, and would undoubtedly adopt a more favorable stance should Syria progress in its talks with Israel.

The main dividing line in current Lebanese politics, therefore, is the attitude toward Syria—or, more specifically, how much power over Lebanese politics one is willing to see Damascus exert. Along these lines, it is possible to distinguish two groups in the Lebanese polity today: those who are willing to work within the parameters defined by Syria (including the current government and most MPs), and those who refuse to do so, or do so only partially, episodically, and with extreme reluctance.

Although this division is partly confessional (Christians overwhelmingly reject Syrian influence, while more Muslims, especially Shiites, are willing to work within its confines), it is by no means exclusively so.

- First, certain segments of the Christian community actively cooperate with Syria, and derive major

benefits from that collaboration. This is particularly true within the Armenian, Greek Orthodox, and, to a lesser extent, Greek Catholic communities. The predominantly Greek Orthodox Syrian Social Nationalist Party, for instance, is one of Syria's main agents in Lebanon. Even the Maronite community includes politicians who are more than willing to work under Syrian supervision—from President Elias Hrawi himself down to lesser figures such as Elie Hobeiqa and other MPs coopted by Syria or Syrian allies in Lebanon.

- Second, and even more significantly, the opposition to the current, Syrian- dominated political order is not exclusively Christian. Among Muslims as well, there is a great deal of resentment of Syria's heavy-handed presence, especially in the Sunni community. As mentioned earlier, this was demonstrated in 1992 by the opposition of Beirut's Sunnis to the holding of parliamentary elections. It was subsequently confirmed by the strong electoral showing of the al-Hoss list in the capital.

A. Inter-Confessional Rivalries and Alliances

The main dividing lines in Lebanese politics today are no longer confessional. As suggested above, the primary cleavage instead has become the relationship to Syria. Nevertheless, the Lebanese political system remains a confessional one, and like any confessional system—particularly one in which the actual power of each sect remains to be defined—it encourages intense inter-sectarian competition, as each sect seeks to maximize its share of the political pie.

A1. Maronite-Shiite Tensions

Two non-Sunni minorities in a region that is overwhelmingly Sunni, Maronites and Shiites share an important characteristic. They also have a common stake in the survival of Lebanon as an independent political entity in which it is Sunnis, in fact, who constitute a minority. Historically, therefore, it is not surprising that the Shiites have been hardly more receptive to the appeal of pan-Arabism than their Maronite counterparts. Both sects would tend to lose too much from the dilution of Lebanon into a wider Sunni Arab entity.

During the civil war, this shared interest between Maronites and Shiites fueled speculations that the post-war period might see the replacement of the Sunni-Maronite alliance sealed in 1943 with a Shiite-Maronite alliance. However, any substantial Maronite rapprochement with the Shiites is difficult under the current conditions, because the Maronites see the most important organizations in the Shiite community as completely subservient to foreign powers: Syria (Amal) and Iran (Hizballah). The Maronites, like moderate Sunnis, also remain deeply apprehensive

about growing religious militancy, which is particularly pronounced among Shiites.

A2. Sunni-Shiite Tensions

A Sunni-Shiite antagonism is largely rooted in the confessional system: if a premise of the political order in Lebanon is that power must be divided approximately equally between Christians and Muslims, then Shiites can expand their power only at the expense of the Sunnis, and vice-versa.

Prior to the war, the Shiites' under-privileged status indirectly benefited the Sunnis, who were the Maronites' coalition partner. When the civil war took on increasingly pronounced sectarian overtones, Shiite leaders and activists began to speak more and more frequently of the Sunnis' "betrayal" of their Shiite Muslim brethren, referring to the Sunnis' post-1943 willingness to forsake Islamic solidarity for the material and symbolic benefit of a partnership with a Christian minority. Some Shiite politicians and ideologues even seemed to be more resentful of perceived Sunni privilege than of Maronite power, and they directly blamed Sunnis for the deprivation of the Shiites. By the early 1980s, anti-Sunni feelings were running high in many Shiite circles. Shiite fundamentalist groups in particular became a major source of anti-Sunni rhetoric.

Events following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon only exacerbated the rift between the Sunnis and the Shiites. The Sunnis had long regarded the PLO as a substitute for the community-based militia that they did not have. They had seen an alliance with Palestinian guerrillas as a counterweight to the well-organized military machines that the Maronites (with the Lebanese Forces) and the Shiites (with Amal) had developed. The PLO's expulsion from Beirut, therefore, generated new anxieties among the Sunnis, who came to feel very vulnerable, especially as Shiite power rose.

Sunni fears were not unfounded. When West Beirut fell to a coalition of Shiite and Druze militias, the well-established, cosmopolitan Sunni community of West Beirut suffered from the excesses and exactions of Shiite newcomers to Beirut. Personal property was seized, businesses were made to pay "protection money," and many Shiite militiamen behaved in an openly sectarian fashion. Beirut's Sunnis came to feel as if the actions of Shiite militiamen were deliberately aimed at destroying their community as a political and economic force in the nation's capital. A few years later, between 1985 and 1987, Amal's military assault on Palestinian refugee camps exacerbated Sunni-Shiite hostility, and contributed to the intense dislike that many Sunnis feel toward the new Shiite leadership.

For their part, Shiite leaders fear a new Sunni-Maronite pact in which the Shiites would once again be only minor partners, as before the civil war. The selection of Rafiq Hariri as Prime Minister in October 1992 fueled such apprehension, given

the initially close ties between Hariri and President Hrawi. Soon after Hariri announced the composition of his cabinet, Berri expressed public displeasure at many of the appointments made by the new Prime Minister, and at not being sufficiently consulted in the process that led to the formation of the government. Since then, there have been numerous manifestations of tensions between Hariri and Berri. Such disagreements reflect, in part, the mutual fears and suspicions between two sects that compete for influence in a system that is still in flux.

A3. Potential Sunni-Maronite Alliances

One possible inter-sectarian elite alliance would be between moderate Sunni personalities (such as Tammam Salam and Salim al-Hoss) and pragmatic Maronite leaders eager to find new allies in the Muslim community (Sa'adeh, the Patriarch, and a few independent Maronite politicians). Presumably, an alliance along these lines would constitute the core of a "constructive opposition" to Prime Minister Hariri's government.

Four factors that could bring these forces together are: their alienation from the current political order and powerlessness in it; their belief that, by combining forces, they could pose a credible political threat to Hariri's government; their common fear of the growing influence that militant Shiites exert over the country's politics; and their perception that Amal and Hizballah in particular need to be opposed because of their subservience to foreign interests, and because their domestic agendas threaten the survival of Lebanon as a multiconfessional society.

A very different a more likely scenario under the present conditions would be the integration of Sa'adeh into a reshuffled cabinet still headed by Hariri. Through his repeated overtures to Syria and Syrian allies in Lebanon, and through his constant efforts to redefine the *Kata'ib*'s identity, Sa'adeh has paved the road for such a possibility. If the latter were to materialize, it too would represent a new Sunni-Maronite alliance of a sort. From the perspective of Damascus and Syrian allies, it would present the advantage of depriving the opposition of one of its major forces. From Sa'adeh's point of view, it would provide the Phalange Party with new influence and greater leverage over its Maronite rivals, and could constitute an important step toward the reintegration of the Maronite community into the institutional game. On the other hand, it also would be a very risky move politically: it would further alienate the *Kata'ib* from other Christian groupings, and it could easily bring about a new split within the party (in which there is much rank-and-file opposition to improved relations with Damascus).

A4. Toward a New Druze-Christian Understanding?

A decade after bloody battles in the Shuf between the Lebanese Forces and the militia of the Progressive Socialist Party, 1993 saw several important steps toward a Druze-Christian

reconciliation. As Minister for the Affairs of the Displaced, Walid Junblatt has been successful in organizing the return of several thousand Christian families to their villages in the mountain. His September meeting with Patriarch Sfayr created further momentum and goodwill between Christians and Druze.

There is reason to believe that Druze-Christian relations will continue to improve, as that is clearly to both communities' advantage. Christian refugees need Walid Junblatt's cooperation to be able to return to their villages. Only if they receive proper reassurances and material compensation will Druze squatters vacate the homes they now occupy. The resources controlled by Junblatt's ministry can help repair damaged homes and rehabilitate the infrastructure of Christian and mixed Druze-Christian villages. As Druze leader, Junblatt also has the power to affect the attitude of Druze villagers toward returning Christian refugees.

For his part, Walid Junblatt desperately needs to forge a new Druze-Christian bargain, for at least two reasons. First, Christians represent a very large segment of the population of the Shuf district, Junblatt's power base. That will be even more true after all refugees have finally returned to their villages.

Second, if, as the Ta'if Agreement mandates, the electoral law is ever changed so that parliamentary elections take place at the level of the governorate (*muhafaza*, one of five administrative units into which the entire country is divided) instead of the *qada'* (the much smaller electoral districts in which these elections have traditionally taken place), Junblatt will compete no longer in his native Shuf district, but in the much larger governorate of Mount Lebanon. In that governorate, which includes the predominantly Christian districts of Kisirwan, Metn, and Jubayl, Druze represent only a small minority in a population that is more than 75 percent Christian. As a consequence, the PSP's electoral prospects—including the election of Walid Junblatt—would be decided largely by Christian votes (predominantly Maronite ones). Among the candidates for the seats allotted to the Druze community, those who would have the greatest chance of being elected would be the preferred Druze candidates of the Christian majority—and they would not necessarily be from the Junblatti clan.

In other words, should parliamentary elections ever take place at the governorate level, the political future of the Junblatts and the Druze would become largely dependent upon Christian attitudes toward them. Even if an intermediary solution were adopted, involving the division of the Mount Lebanon governorate into two electoral provinces, one in the north and one in the south, with the Druze population concentrated in the latter, the southern province (which would presumably include the current districts of the Shuf, Aley, and Ba'abda) would still have a Christian majority. Although in such a district Junblatt would have a greater chance of being elected, he would still need substantial Christian votes.

In this context, it is hard to overstate the significance of a new Druze-Maronite bargain to the future of the Druze community—and to that of the Junblatti clan. It also becomes easier to understand Junblatt's desire to receive the Ministry for the Affairs of the Displaced in the Hariri government. Should he succeed in the difficult and politically sensitive task with which he has been entrusted, he would be remembered as the man of Druze-Christian reconciliation, and ensure Maronite votes for himself and his family for decades to come.

B. Intra-Confessional Divisions and Alliances

As noted earlier, the civil war saw groups struggling for the leadership of their respective sects, and it thus exacerbated old intra-confessional rivalries and created new ones. In fact, by the mid-1980s, intra-confessional feuds had become more salient than inter-confessional ones. This process culminated in the late 1980s with devastating infighting within the Shiite and Maronite communities: the Amal-Hizballah battles of the 1988-90 period, and the showdown between pro-Aoun forces and the Lebanese Forces militia in the Christian enclave of East Beirut in 1989-90. Although hostilities ceased following Aoun's downfall and the establishment of a virtual Syrian condominium in the country, Lebanon's three main sects remain internally fragmented.

B1. Divisions among the Shiites

There are currently two dynamics at work among the Shiites. The most important one is for the hearts and minds of the community as a whole, and it is being played mostly between Amal and Hizballah. A second, less significant rivalry is between two individuals: Nabih Berri, Amal's leader and current Speaker of Parliament, and Mohsen Dalloul, the current Minister of Defense.

B1a. The Amal-Hizballah Rivalry

Hizballah emerged and developed as a direct rival to Amal. In 1988, tensions that had been building up for years between the two groups exploded into full-blown armed clashes, after Hizballah challenged Amal's prominence among the Shiites of southern Beirut and in south Lebanon. For two years, the conflict between the two militias raged. Only through repeated Syrian and Iranian mediations were several cease-fires arranged, the last one of which was in 1990.

Since then, an uneasy stand-off has prevailed between Amal and Hizballah, and the two even struck an electoral alliance in the south during the legislative elections of 1992. The competition between Amal and Hizballah nevertheless remains real, and one suspects that it would even trigger some violence were it not for the presence of Syrian troops.

At one level, the Amal-Hizballah rivalry is an indigenous struggle between two groups that have sharply contrasting visions of their community's future. At another level, however, it

reflects a changing relationship between Syria (Amal's patron) and Iran (Hizballah's sponsor).

Between 1983 and 1988, the conflict between Amal and Hizballah was relatively muted, not only because Hizballah was still in its early development phase, but also because of the close cooperation between Tehran and Damascus in Lebanon. Because it needed Syrian support for its war against Iraq, Iran did not want to alienate Hafiz al-Assad by supporting Hizballah policies that would have represented a direct threat to the influence of Syria's Shiite client, Amal. After 1988, however, when relations between Iran and Syria cooled off markedly, Iran felt freer to let its Lebanese client challenge the power of Amal. This partially explains the clashes that pitted the two militias against each other between 1988 and 1990.

The current truce between Amal and Hizballah is fragile, and could still be disrupted in the event of mounting tensions between Iran and Syria (although Hizballah is aware of its limited freedom of maneuver vis-à-vis Damascus, and is thus unlikely to confront Amal violently). Similarly, should a Syrian-Israeli peace agreement require Damascus to rein in Hizballah, new clashes between Amal and Hizballah would be likely to erupt.

B1b. The Berri-Dalloul Rivalry

Side by side with the Hizballah-Amal contest, a more personal rivalry opposes Nabih Berri to Mohsen Dalloul. The latter is a secular Shiite from the Biqa', who is a former Minister of Agriculture (in the Rashid al-Solh government) and was appointed Minister of Defense in the Hariri government. While the Hizballah-Amal rivalry is over the hearts and minds of the Shiite community, the conflict between Dalloul and Berri is primarily over power at the highest levels of the state. It involves two strong personalities who are struggling to strengthen their respective positions and weaken each other by placing their respective clients at key levels of the bureaucracy.

Berri's main asset in this rivalry is of course his leadership of Amal, and his role as Speaker of Parliament. Both positions give Berri access to considerable resources. The overwhelming electoral victory of Amal's list in the south in the 1992 parliamentary elections also bolstered Berri's standing, both on his home turf and nationally.

Dalloul's primary resource is Damascus' strong backing. Indeed, Dalloul is probably Syria's main client in Beirut. Some commentators have even claimed that Dalloul enjoys more independent power than Prime Minister Hariri, and that he has better access to Damascus. Although Dalloul had long been considered close to Hariri (the Hariri-Dalloul relationship was cemented through marriage in 1992, when Dalloul's son Nizar married Hariri's step-daughter), the two men had a fall-out

following Hariri's decision to deploy Lebanese Army troops in the south in the wake of Israel's attack in late July - early August, 1993. Dalloul initially had approved of the deployment. When he realized the extent of Damascus's opposition to it, however, he quickly dissociated himself from the decision, in a move that was widely criticized (including by al-Nahar Publisher Ghassan Tueyni) as a blow to Cabinet solidarity. Such events have fueled speculation that Damascus may be using Dalloul both to keep a close eye on Hariri, and to make sure that neither Amal nor Berri become too influential in Shiite politics.

B1c. Toward Re-Alignments Within the Shiite Community?

The last few months have suggested that some important re-alignments may be in the making among Shiites. First, there has been evidence of tensions between the individual who has long been regarded as Hizballah's spiritual guide, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, and the Shiite organization's current Secretary General, Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah. Meanwhile, contacts have multiplied between, on the one hand, Fadlallah and Nabih Berri, and, on the other hand, Nasrallah and Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddin. The latter is a former close associate but now a rival of Berri, and he is likely to become the President of the Higher Shiite Council in forthcoming elections to the Presidency of that influential body. If such trends were to continue, they could bring about a break-up of Hizballah, combined with two new axes in Shiite politics: a Fadlallah-Berri axis and a Nasrallah-Shamseddine, or Hizballah-Higher Shiite Council axis. Such a scenario would have momentous consequences on Shiite politics, if only because it would put some of the resources of the Higher Shiite Council at the disposal of Hizballah.

B2. Divisions among the Sunnis

As mentioned earlier, the most significant cleavage among Sunnis today is over the relationship to Syria. That variable defines at least three groups. The first is made up of Syrian clients, many of whom are found in Parliament and the Cabinet. They owe everything to Damascus and lack legitimacy within their own community. A second group includes individuals who accept to work within the confines of Syrian power, and frequently report to Damascus, but are not mere Syrian puppets and enjoy some independence power. Prime Minister Hariri and many of the technocrats he has brought with him belong to that category. Finally, there is a group of Sunni politicians, mostly Beirutis from well-established families, who are clearly opposed to Syrian power, accordingly have been undermined by Damascus, but nevertheless enjoy some influence because of the support they receive from their community. Two such individuals are former Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss and Tammam Salam. A tacit alliance between these two men would form a powerful bloc within the Sunni community. Salim al-Hoss would contribute his credentials as a well-respected economist known for his integrity and tolerance. Tammam Salam—also a respected and moderate figure—would bring with him the prestige of his family, as well as the resources he

controls through his presidency of the Islamic *Maqasid* organization.

In addition to the cleavage defined by the attitude toward Damascus, there is growing tension among Sunnis between secular and fundamentalist forces. The religious establishment itself is feeling the pressure of fundamentalist power and assertiveness. The Islamic Charitable Works Association has established footholds in a number of mosques, and is now reportedly hoping to gain control over the office of the Mufti of the Republic. The religious hierarchy is not alone in worrying about this phenomenon. In late 1993, both Tammam Salam and Salim al-Hoss publicly expressed their concern, and they extended their support to the current Mufti, who desperately seeks to contain fundamentalist influence in clerical institutions.

B3. Intra-Maronite Divisions

Since an earlier section described intra-Maronite divisions at length, this one will necessarily be brief. Suffice it to say that 1993 did very little to increase political unity within the Maronite community.

- When in November, 1993, the *Kata'ib* party held what it called an "Inter-Christian Conference," which was designed to create bridges with other Christian groupings, the meeting was boycotted by Aounists, the Lebanese Forces, the National Liberal Party, and the National Bloc. What the Phalange had thus promoted as a first step toward Christian reconciliation thus ended up providing a dramatic illustration of the party's isolation within the Christian community.

- Divisions within the *Kata'ib* itself appear to be widening. Mention was made earlier of the party split in early, 1993. Over the past few months, the Phalange's attempt to adopt a more conciliatory attitude toward Syria not only has alienated other Christian groupings, but it also has created much controversy within the party. In particular, it appears to have widened the gap between the *Kata'ib* leadership and its rank-and-file. This may not be foreign to the bomb explosion which destroyed part of the Phalange's headquarters on December 20, 1993. The *Kata'ib* appears to be in a bind: under the present conditions, it can only reintegrate the institutional game by moving closer to Syria; doing so, however, will antagonize Christians, and thus undermine support for the party.

- Finally, prominent Maronite families themselves appear to be increasingly prone to debilitating personal rivalries. One example pits President Elias Hrawi against his nephew Khalil, who was responsible for defeating the President's son Roy in the 1992 parliamentary elections. Last October, Khalil Hrawi

accepted to step down as President of the influential Finance and Budget Parliamentary Committee, after his uncle threatened to resign over the matter. President Hrawi was thus willing to create a national political crisis to carry out a personal vendetta against his nephew! Similarly, since the death of former President Sulayman Franjieh in July, 1992, the Zgharta family has been handicapped by growing rivalries in its ranks. The conflict between Franjieh's grandson, Sulayman, and his older son, Robert, is increasingly obvious. Robert appears to have the support of some of the close family, while Sulayman finds his base in the family's former militia, the Marada. There even is a third figure -- Samir Franjieh -- in the growing contest for control of the family.

C. Potential Re-Alignments and New Domestic Bargains in the Event of a Decline in Syrian Influence

In the unlikely event of a significant decline in Damascus' influence over Lebanese affairs—perhaps as a condition for a return of the Golan Heights to Syrian sovereignty—some cross-confessional realignments would take place. In pursuing this scenario, one can imagine the emergence of a broad, cross-confessional coalition that would include the following forces, all of which are fairly moderate, open to inter-sectarian dialogue, and opposed to substantial foreign interference in the country. This alliance would include:

For the Shiites: several traditional leaders in the south, Beirut, and the Biqa', who, unlike many of their colleagues, have been able to maintain a substantial degree of influence within their community, yet have suffered considerably from the competition of Amal and Hizballah. Most prominent here would be Muhammad Yusif Baydun in Beirut and Hussein al-Husseini in the Biqa'. Both would be acceptable partners to the Sunni and Maronite forces identified below. (Hussein al-Husseini has maintained a longstanding dialogue with the Maronite Patriarch; should the balance of power in the country change against elements too closely identified with Syria, al-Husseini and the Patriarch would be in a very good position to serve as a catalyst for a Maronite-Shiite rapprochement.)

For the Sunnis: mostly professional and technocratic elements, as well as individuals involved in secular-oriented voluntary associations and intellectual clubs. This would mean in particular individuals around Salim al-Hoss and Tammam Salam, with or without pro-Hariri elements. Hoss's and Salam's moderate positions, their reputation for tolerance and integrity, and their anti-Syrian, nationalist stance make them privileged potential partners for the Maronites and for Shiite leaders such as Baydun or Hussein al-Husseini. The most significant political forces excluded from this Sunni bloc would be politicians now closely aligned with Syria, former Sunni militia leaders, and Sunni fundamentalists.

For the Maronites: an alliance between a reinvigorated *Kata'ib* Party and independent and well-respected Maronite leaders, backed by the moral endorsement of the Patriarch.

It bears repeating that, at a time when the Maronite are fragmented and demoralized, the Patriarch has a key role to play in helping rebuild the community, and in providing the moral justification for its political alliances. The nationalist and non-sectarian positions that the Patriarchate has taken repeatedly at times of national crisis (as in 1936 against the French and in 1958 against a Maronite President, Camille Chamoun) makes it a natural candidate for building bridges to moderate Muslim leaders.

It is also clear that, when one excludes Maronite political figures that are largely discredited, both within and outside of their own sect (e.g., Samir Ja'ja' or Elie Hobeika), and political figures who may have significant support but have been effectively neutralized (e.g., Aoun, who in any event does not cooperate well with others and, because of his past, is not acceptable to Muslims), the only players left around which the Maronite community may be rebuilt are the Kata'ib Party, a few independent Maronite political figures, and the Patriarch. Only they have shown a real willingness to reach out to moderate Muslim leaders, and only they may be acceptable partners for these moderate Muslims elites.

For the Druze: there is no major obstacle to the establishment of good working relations between the forces identified above and Walid Junblatt and his PSP. Thus, the Druze community, too, could easily fit in this alliance.

SECTION V
CONCLUSION

As events in Eastern Europe and elsewhere suggest, the post-cold war era will witness increasing fragmentation, balkanization, and ethnic and religious conflict around the globe. In this context, the world has a great deal to learn from Lebanon, which is currently seeking to put itself back together after going through the very kind of disintegration that is now tearing apart other countries.

There are of course certain factors peculiar to Lebanon, which makes its present effort at political reconstruction a unique experience. Here, the fact that Lebanon's future is so closely tied to that of the Arab-Israeli conflict immediately comes to mind. But in many other respects, the challenges that Lebanon faces in mid-1993 are the very same ones that countries now in the midst of vicious ethnic and religious hatreds will one day have to confront:

- How to rebuild a polity? What are the most effective strategies for achieving national reconciliation?
- How to re-instill the values of compromise and conciliation and the art of give and take among leaders who, not so long ago, were at each other's throats? And how can such leaders be made to coexist peacefully within the same government or parliament?
- What are some of the variables that affect the success of the process through which new bargains are struck, and new power-sharing arrangements agreed upon?
- How can the forces of moderation be strengthened?
- How can marginalized communities be made to reintegrate the political process?
- How can post civil war governments reconcile the necessity to integrate in their ranks as many factions as possible, so as to facilitate a broad movement of national reconciliation, and the imperative to avoid political paralysis, so as to produce rapid improvements in the economy and security conditions?
- What role can outside assistance play in the process of reconstruction?

What happens in Lebanon can help us answer these questions. More importantly, whether Lebanon can rebuild itself, and whether the U.S. Government shows the will to help in that process, has

implications that go far beyond the borders of a small country. As the former Ambassador of Lebanon to the United States recently wrote:

> "The collapse of the Lebanese nation-state in the mid-seventies was in a sense an early warning to the world. I hope the rebirth of Lebanon in the mid-nineties from the ashes of war as a reconciled society and a viable state, will send a message of hope for societies embattled along the same issues, as humanity starts to contemplate the rise of the twenty-first century."